ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS

THE ORATIONS ON BUNKER HILL MONUMENT THE CHARACTER OF WASHINGTON AND THE LANDING AT PLYMOUTH

BY

DANIEL WEBSTER

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WEBSTER'S ORATIONS EC. ENG. CLAS.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is a fact worthy of notice that, among all the masters of eloquence known to history, only four have produced works which have been generally recognized as contributions to the permanent literature of the world. These were Demosthenes in ancient Athens, Cicero in old Rome, Edmund Burke in Great Britain, and Daniel Webster in America. A comparison of the public discourses of these four great orators reveals, of course, many differences resulting from the diversity of race, time, circumstance, and the character of the audiences to whom they were addressed. A closer examination, however, will disclose numerous similarities in their fundamental construction, going far to show that the principles of true eloquence are always and everywhere the same, and that the art which swayed the minds of multitudes of men twenty centuries ago remains in essential points as unchanged as human thought itself. Between the orations of Demosthenes, so distinctively ancient and Grecian, and those of Webster, so distinctively modern and American, one may detect a striking resemblance. Both are characterized by the same sustained appeal to the understanding and by the same clear-cut, vigorous, and perfectly intelligible course of reasoning. In their unadorned simplicity each is the work of a sculptor rather than painter. "To test Webster's oratory, which

has ever been very attractive to me," said the late Dr. Francis Lieber, "I read a portion of my favorite speeches of Demosthenes, and then read, always aloud, parts of Webster; then returned to the Athenian: and Webster stood the test." This resemblance was not the result of any study of ancient models on Mr. Webster's part, nor of any conscious or unconscious effort to imitate the masterpieces of Athenian eloquence. It was due rather to a similarity of intellectual powers wholly independent of time, or race, or other environment.

The quality of Webster's imagination, which was of an historical rather than poetic cast, had much to do with the power and peculiar charm of his oratory. But it was his simplicity of diction, and his perfect mastery of pure, idiomatic English, which gave to his discourses their distinctive classic elegance, and made them worthy of a permanent place in our literature. As specimens, therefore, of a correct, clear, and vigorous style of composition, full of warmth and vitality, these orations are worthy of the most careful attention of every one who would perfect himself in the use of the English tongue; as notable examples of persuasive discourse, logical, forcible, and convincing, they especially commend themselves to those who aspire to distinction as public speakers; as containing lessons of the purest and most disinterested patriotism, they appeal to Americans everywhere, and should be read and studied by every American youth.

Daniel Webster was born in Salisbury (now Franklin), N.H., Jan. 18, 1782. His father, who was a farmer, had served as a soldier in both the French and Indian and the Revolutionary Wars, and later became a member of the State Legislature, and judge of the county court. Being brought up in poverty, in a region at that time the very outskirts of civiliza-

tion, the boy had none of the opportunities which are now supposed to be indispensable to the making of a great man. His mother taught him to read, and as the schools which he attended during his childhood were extremely inefficient, it is probable that the best part of his early education was acquired at home. Being a delicate child, he was generally exempt from the hard tasks required of other boys in his condition of life, and, while much of his time was devoted to play, he developed a passionate eagerness for books. "I read what I could get to read," he says, "went to school when I could, and when not at school was a farmer's youngest boy, not good for much, for want of health and strength, but expected to do something. In those boyish days there were two things which I did dearly love,—reading and playing, passions which did not cease to struggle when boyhood was over, (have they yet altogether?) and in regard to which neither *cita mors* nor the *victoria laeta* could be said of either."

When fourteen years of age, he was sent to the Phillips Exeter Academy. There he made his first acquaintance with the world, suffering much from the ridicule of his schoolmates, to whom his rustic clothes and uncouth manners were a source of great merriment. Although he made rapid progress in his studies, his lack of self-confidence was such, that he found it impossible to stand up and "speak a piece" before the school. At the end of nine months it was thought best that he should return home; and his father made arrangements whereby he should continue his studies under the tuition of a clergyman, the Rev. Samuel Wood, at Boscawen. This change was made in order that the lad might the more quickly complete his preparation for college; for, notwithstanding the poverty of the family, his father had decided to give him as thorough an education as was then available. He

remained with Dr. Wood only six months, and in August, 1797, contrived to enter Dartmouth College, from which he was duly graduated in 1801. The college was at that time scarcely equal in efficiency to any well-equipped high school of the present day; and Webster's scholarship was neither extensive nor profound. He read everything that came to hand, and whatever was worthy of remembrance he never forgot. He acquired a fair knowledge of Latin literature, and gained a smattering of Greek and mathematics. He was not only considered the best general scholar in the college, but he was looked upon by both the faculty and the students as a remarkable man with an extraordinary career before him. He soon overcame the boyish timidity which had been so much in his way at Exeter, and developed an especial inclination for public speaking. Indeed, the fame of his eloquence extended beyond the college walls; and in 1800 he was invited by the townspeople of Hanover to deliver the Fourth-of-July oration in their village. He had not then completed his eighteenth year; yet in that youthful speech, his first public utterance on questions of national import, there was a distinct foreshadowing of the enduring work which he was afterwards to perform for his countrymen and the world. It was, of course, crude and imitative, as would be expected of a boy; its language was florid in the extreme, and its general style was that of the "spread eagle," full of bombast and figures of rhetoric; but in its thought and leading purpose there breathed the same manly, patriotic spirit that runs through all his maturer utterances, and distinguishes them from the commonplace oratory of political demagogues.

Immediately after leaving college, Mr. Webster began the study of law in the office of Thomas W. Thompson of Salisbury; but, wishing to earn money to help his elder brother

Ezekiel to go through college, he soon afterwards went to Fryeburg, Me., and took charge of a small academy there. In the following year he returned to Salisbury, and remained with Mr. Thompson until 1804; then, desiring better opportunities for extending his legal knowledge, he went to Boston, where he entered the office of Christopher Gore, and where, in 1805, he was admitted to the bar. He began practicing in Boscawen; and in 1807, having built up a fairly good business there, he turned it over to his brother Ezekiel, and removed to Portsmouth, then the capital of the State. Being now fairly established in his profession, he was married in 1808 to Grace Fletcher of Hopkinton. He soon distinguished himself as the foremost lawyer in the State, and attracted much attention by his eloquent utterances in opposing the declaration of war against Great Britain. In 1812 he was elected to Congress by the Federalists, and on taking his seat was placed on the Committee on Foreign Affairs. The first public act which brought him into prominence as a member of Congress was his introduction of a series of resolutions calling for an inquiry concerning the announcement to the United States of the revocation of Napoleon's decrees against American shipping. This was followed a few months later by his first great speech in the House, — a speech in opposition to a bill for the encouragement of enlistments. In 1814 he was reëlected to Congress; and in 1816, at the expiration of his second term, he removed to Boston, where for seven years he devoted himself exclusively to the practice of his profession. In 1818, by his management of the celebrated Dartmouth College case, he achieved a success which not only placed him at the head of the American bar, but gave him great prominence as an able exponent and uncompromising defender of the Federal Con-

stitution. The Legislature of New Hampshire had passed an act virtually abrogating the original charter of the college, and providing for the appointment of a new board of trustees. The old board contested the legality of this act; and a suit against the new board, in action of trover for the college seal, was carried to the Superior Court of the State, where it was decided in favor of the defendants. Thereupon the case was carried to the Supreme Court of the United States, where, through Mr. Webster's management, the judgment of the State court was reversed, and the act of the State Legislature was declared to be a violation of that clause of the Federal Constitution which prohibits the States from passing laws in impairment of contracts. The decision was of national importance, since it "went further, perhaps, than any other in our history towards limiting State sovereignty, and extending the jurisdiction of the Federal Supreme Court."

On Dec. 22, 1820, the two hundredth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims, Mr. Webster delivered his famous discourse on the "First Settlement of New England,"—the first of those great efforts which placed him among the foremost orators of the world. In 1822 he was again elected a representative to Congress, this time from Boston; and in 1824 and 1826 he was reëlected. In 1827 he resigned his membership in the House to accept a seat in the Senate, where he remained, by successive reëlections, until 1841. His oration on the laying of the corner stone of Bunker Hill Monument, in 1825, and that on Adams and Jefferson (1826), are among the noblest historical addresses ever delivered. "The spirit of these orations is that of the broadest patriotism enlightened by a clear perception of the fundamental importance of the Federal union between the States, and an ever-present consciousness of the mighty future of our

country, and its moral significance in the history of the world." In the Bunker Hill oration he appeared at his best. His style had been perfected, and he "touched his highest point in the difficult task of commemorative oratory." Eighteen years later, upon the completion of the monument, he was called upon to deliver a second address at the same place and upon the same theme. This later effort, although it failed to attain to the massive dignity and grandeur of the first, must always be regarded as one of the finest examples of patriotic oratory to which Americans have ever listened.

From the beginning of his career in the United States Senate, Mr. Webster was naturally recognized as one of the most influential men in the nation, and, had he been more distinctively a partisan, it is not improbable that he would eventually have occupied the President's chair. But his patriotism was superior to personal ambition; and his powers as a statesman and orator, instead of being directed to the aggrandizement of the party with which he was affiliated, were devoted to the defense of the Constitution and the preservation of the Union. In 1830 he delivered his celebrated second speech on Foote's resolution, generally known as the "Reply to Hayne," in which he reached the culmination of his career as an orator. It was delivered in refutation of a speech by Mr. Hayne accusing the New-England States of attempting to aggrandize themselves at the expense of all the rest of the Union, and defending South Carolina in her proposed policy of nullification. Although Mr. Webster's fame extended in the years which followed, and he made many other speeches, he never again attained to so high a point as in that remarkable and memorable discourse. It was a speech for which, as he himself said, his whole life had been in a certain

sense a preparation. Of all the speeches ever made in Congress there has probably never been another that has been so widely read, or has had so great influence in the shaping of men's thoughts. In 1841 Mr. Webster was appointed Secretary of State by President Harrison, and upon the death of the latter he was continued in office by President Tyler until after the completion of the famous Ashburton Treaty with Great Britain, in 1842. He then returned to the practice of law in Boston; but in 1844 he was again appointed to the Senate, where he distinguished himself by opposing the admission of Texas as a slave State, and strenuously combating the prosecution of the Mexican War. In 1848 and again in 1852 he was a candidate before the national convention of Whigs for the nomination to the Presidency, but was defeated in the first case by General Taylor and in the second by General Scott. In 1850, led by a zealous desire to promote peace between the opposing political factions, he was induced to give his adhesion to Clay's "compromise measures," and on the 7th of March delivered his last great speech,—a speech in which he favored the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, and opposed the Wilmot Proviso for the exclusion of slavery from the new Territories thereafter acquired by the United States. This speech was a great disappointment to his friends, and lost him the support and confidence of the Whig party. In the latter part of the same year, however, he was appointed Secretary of State by President Fillmore. This position he held until May, 1852, when he resigned on account of ill health, and retired to his home at Marshfield, Mass., where he died on the 24th of October in the same year.

In the great influence which Mr. Webster, as a public speaker, wielded over the minds of his hearers, he was aided by his re-

markable physical attributes. He possessed in a wonderful degree an indefinable personal magnetism which impressed every one with a sense of his greatness. His face, his eyes, his voice, were such that whoever looked upon him and heard him speak, felt intuitively that he was a man of most extraordinary powers. Sydney Smith, when he saw him, exclaimed, "Good heavens! he is a small cathedral by himself;" and Carlyle, writing of him, said, "He is a magnificent specimen. As a logic fencer or parliamentary Hercules, one would incline to back him at first sight against all the extant world. The tanned complexion; the amorphous crag-like face; the dull black eyes under the precipice of brows, like dull anthracite furnaces needing only to be blown; the mastiff mouth accurately closed,—I have not traced so much of *silent Berserker rage* that I remember of in any man."

Of the quality of Webster's oratory, the Hon. Rufus Choate says, "His multiform eloquence became at once so much accession to permanent literature, in the strictest sense solid, attractive, and rich. Recall what pervaded all these forms of display, and every effort in every form: that union of naked intellect, in its largest measure, which penetrates to the exact truth of the matter in hand by intuition or by inference, and discerns everything which may make it intelligible, probable, and credible to another, with an emotional and moral nature profound, passionate, and ready to kindle, and with imagination enough to supply a hundredfold more of illustration and aggrandizement than his taste suffered him to accept; that union of greatness of soul with depth of heart which made his speaking almost more an exhibition of character than of mere genius; the style not merely pure, clear Saxon, but so constructed, so numerous as far as becomes prose, so forcible, so abounding in unlabored felicities, the words

so choice, the epithet so pictured, the matter absolute truth, or the most exact and spacious resemblance the human wit can devise; the treatment of the subject, if you have regard to the kind of truth he had to handle,—political, ethical, legal,—as deep as Paley's, or Locke's, or Butler's, . . . yet that depth and that completeness of sense made transparent as crystal waters, raised on winged language, vivified, fused, and poured along in a tide of emotion fervid, and incapable to be withstood."

The history of Bunker Hill Monument and of the circumstances attending the delivery of Webster's famous orations—the one at the laying of its corner stone, the other at its completion—may be briefly narrated.

Gen. Joseph Warren, the hero of the battle of Bunker Hill, and the first prominent martyr of the Revolutionary War, was buried upon the hill on the day following the action, June 18, 1775. Early in the following year the Massachusetts Lodge of Masons, of which he had been the presiding officer, applied to the Provisional Government of the Colony for permission to take up his remains, and inter them with the usual ceremonies and solemnities of the order. The request was granted, on condition that nothing should be done that would prevent the government from erecting at some future time a monument to his memory. This may be regarded as the first movement made towards commemorating in any way the historic struggle on Bunker Hill; and yet, although a funeral procession was formed, and a fitting eulogy on Gen. Warren was delivered, no measures were taken towards the building of a monument.

On the 8th of April, 1777, however, a resolution was adopted by the Continental Congress, directing that monuments should be erected to Gen. Warren in Boston and to Gen. Mercer at Fred-

ericksburg; but no steps were ever taken towards the carrying out of this resolution.

In 1794 the lodge of Masons at Charlestown decided to erect a monument to Gen. Warren at their own expense. Land for that purpose was donated to the lodge by the Hon. James Russell of Charlestown, and the monument was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies on the 2d of December of the same year. This monument was a wooden pillar, eighteen feet in height, raised on a pedestal eight feet square, at an elevation of ten feet from the ground. On the summit of the pillar was a gilt urn, and on the south side of the pedestal an appropriate inscription was engraved.

It was not until still thirty years later that any decisive steps were taken towards the building of a monument which should commemorate in a general way the battle of Bunker Hill, and should stand as the nation's expression of honor and gratitude to those who fell there in the defense of American liberty. In 1824 an association was formed, under the leadership of William Tudor, Esq., to whose enthusiasm and perseverance the final success of the undertaking was largely due. After various private conferences among those who were most deeply interested in the project, it was decided to lay the corner stone of the monument on the 17th of June, 1825, the fiftieth anniversary of the battle; and, in order to excite enthusiasm in favor of the work, Gen. Lafayette, at that time the nation's guest, was invited to be present, and participate in the ceremonies. Free transportation was offered to all surviving soldiers of the Revolution, and every effort was made to enlist a national interest in the patriotic occasion.

"The celebration," says Mr. Frothingham, "was unequaled in magnificence by anything of the kind that had been seen in

New England. The morning proved propitious. The air was cool, the sky was clear, and timely showers the previous day had brightened the vesture of Nature into its loveliest hue. Delighted thousands flocked into Boston to bear a part in the proceedings, or to witness the spectacle. At about ten o'clock a procession moved from the State House towards Bunker Hill. The military, in their fine uniforms, formed the van. About two hundred veterans of the Revolution, of whom forty were survivors of the battle, rode in barouches next to the escort. These venerable men, the relics of a past generation, with emaciated frames, tottering limbs, and trembling voices, constituted a touching spectacle. Some wore, as honorable decorations, their old fighting equipments; and some bore the scars of still more honorable wounds. Glistening eyes constituted their answer to the enthusiastic cheers of the grateful multitudes who lined their pathway, and cheered their progress. To this patriot band succeeded the Bunker Hill Monument Association; then the Masonic fraternity, in their splendid regalia, thousands in number; then Lafayette, continually welcomed by tokens of love and gratitude, and the invited guests; then a long array of societies, with their various badges and banners. It was a splendid procession, and of such length that the front nearly reached Charlestown Bridge ere the rear had left Boston Common. It proceeded to Breed's Hill, where the Grand Master of the Freemasons, the President of the Monument Association, and Gen. Lafayette performed the ceremony of laying the corner stone in the presence of a vast concourse of people." The procession then moved to the northern declivity of the hill, where Mr. Webster delivered his oration to a large and appreciative audience.

When the corner stone of the Bunker Hill Monument was thus

laid in 1825, no definite plan for its construction had been decided upon. Among other designs for the proposed monument, one submitted by Solomon Willard, an architect of Boston, was finally adopted; and in 1827 the foundation was laid and the work of construction begun. The funds on hand, amounting to about $55,000, were soon exhausted, however, and in the following year the work was temporarily abandoned. In 1834 a renewed effort was made, a considerable amount of money was raised by subscription, and the building of the great stone shaft was renewed. But the committee having the affair in charge soon found itself without further available means, and progress was again suspended. In 1840 the ladies of Boston and the vicinity took hold of the enterprise. A fair was held in Faneuil Hall, to which every woman in the United States had been invited to contribute, and every effort was made to increase the list of subscriptions. The result was, that a contract was soon afterwards entered into with Mr. Savage of Boston, to finish the monument for $43,000. The work was pushed forward with all reasonable dispatch, and the last stone was raised to the apex at six o'clock in the morning of July 23, 1842.

The monument, which is in the form of an obelisk, is built of Quincy granite, is thirty feet in diameter at the base, and about fifteen feet at the top of the truncated part. It consists of ninety courses of stone, six of them below the ground, and eighty-four above. It was intended that it should be two hundred and twenty feet high; but the precise height is two hundred and twenty-one feet. The observatory at the top is seventeen feet high, and eleven feet in diameter. The cap stone, or apex, is a single stone four feet square at the base, and three feet six inches in height, weighing two tons and a half.

It was arranged by the directors that the completion of the work should be celebrated on the 17th of the following June, the sixty-eighth anniversary of the battle; and Mr. Webster was invited to deliver the oration. "Many circumstances," says Edward Everett, "conspired to increase the interest of the occasion. . . . The President of the United States and his Cabinet had accepted invitations to be present; delegations of the descendants of New England were present from the remotest parts of the Union; one hundred and eight surviving veterans of the Revolution, among whom were some who were in the battle of Bunker Hill, imparted a touching interest to the scene. . . . Mr. Webster was stationed upon an elevated platform in front of the audience and of the monument towering in the background. According to Mr. Frothingham's estimate, a hundred thousand persons were gathered about the spot, and nearly half that number are supposed to have been within the reach of the orator's voice. The ground rises slightly between the platform and the Monument Square, so that the whole of this immense concourse —compactly crowded together, breathless with attention, swayed by one sentiment of admiration and delight—was within the full view of the speaker. The position and the occasion were the height of the moral sublime."

THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE OF THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT AT CHARLESTOWN, MASS., ON THE 17TH OF JUNE, 1825.

THIS uncounted multitude before me and around me proves the feeling which the occasion has excited. These thousands of human faces, glowing with sympathy and joy, and from the impulses of a common gratitude turned reverently to heaven in this spacious temple of the firmament, proclaim that the day, the place, and the purpose of our assembling, have made a deep impression on our hearts.

If, indeed, there be anything in local association fit to affect the mind of man, we need not strive to repress the emotions which agitate us here. We are among the sepulchers of our fathers. We are on ground distinguished by their valor, their constancy, and the shedding of their blood. We are here, not to fix an uncertain date in our annals, nor to draw into notice an obscure and unknown spot. If our humble purpose had never been conceived, if we ourselves had never been born, the 17th of June, 1775, would have been a day on which all subsequent history would have poured its light, and the eminence where we stand, a point of attraction to the eyes of successive generations. But we are Americans. We live in what may be called the "early age" of this great continent; and we know that our posterity, through all time, are here to enjoy and suffer the allotments of

humanity. We see before us a probable train of great events; we know that our own fortunes have been happily cast; and it is natural, therefore, that we should be moved by the contemplation of occurrences which have guided our destiny before many of us were born, and settled the condition in which we should pass that portion of our existence which God allows to men on earth.

We do not read even of the discovery of this continent without feeling something of a personal interest in the event, without being reminded how much it has affected our own fortunes and our own existence. It would be still more unnatural for us, therefore, than for others, to contemplate with unaffected minds that interesting, I may say that most touching and pathetic scene, when the great discoverer of America stood on the deck of his shattered bark, the shades of night falling on the sea, yet no man sleeping; tossed on the billows of an unknown ocean, yet the stronger billows of alternate hope and despair tossing his own troubled thoughts; extending forward his harassed frame, straining westward his anxious and eager eyes, till Heaven at last granted him a moment of rapture and ecstasy, in blessing his vision with the sight of the unknown world.

Nearer to our times, more closely connected with our fates, and therefore still more interesting to our feelings and affections, is the settlement of our own country by colonists from England. We cherish every memorial of these worthy ancestors; we celebrate their patience and fortitude; we admire their daring enterprise; we teach our children to venerate their piety; and we are justly proud of being descended from men who have set the world an example of founding civil institutions on the great and united principles of human freedom and human knowledge. To us their children, the story of their labors and sufferings can never be without its interest. We shall not stand unmoved on the shores of Plymouth while the sea continues to wash it; nor will our brethren in another early and ancient Colony forget the place of its first establishment till their river shall cease to flow

by it.[1] No vigor of youth, no maturity of manhood, will lead the nation to forget the spots where its infancy was cradled and defended.

But the great event in the history of the continent, which we are now met here to commemorate, that prodigy of modern times, at once the wonder and the blessing of the world, is the American Revolution. In a day of extraordinary prosperity and happiness, of high national honor, distinction, and power, we are brought together in this place by our love of country, by our admiration of exalted character, by our gratitude for signal services and patriotic devotion.

The Society whose organ I am[2] was formed for the purpose of rearing some honorable and durable monument to the memory of the early friends of American independence. They have thought that for this object no time could be more propitious than the present prosperous and peaceful period, that no place could claim preference over this memorable spot, and that no day could be more auspicious to the undertaking than the anniversary of the battle which was here fought. The foundation of that monument we have now laid. With solemnities[3] suited to the occasion, with prayers to Almighty God for his blessing, and in the midst of this cloud of witnesses, we have begun the work.

[1] As nearly every one of the Colonies was founded on the bank of a river, it is not clear which is alluded to here. Edward Everett, whose edition of the orations appeared while Webster was still living, mentions the settlement of the Maryland Colony on the St. Mary's River. "The 'Ark' and the 'Dove,'" he says, "are remembered with scarcely less interest by the descendants of the sister Colony than is the 'Mayflower' in New England, which thirteen years earlier, at the same season of the year, bore thither the Pilgrim Fathers."

[2] Mr. Webster was at that time president of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, having been appointed to that position as the successor of Gov. John Brooks, the first president.

[3] Besides the laying of the corner stone with Masonic ceremonies, there was prayer by the Rev. Joseph Thaxter, and an ode was read by the Rev. John Pierpont of Boston.

the great forests of the West prostrated beneath the arm of successful industry, and the dwellers on the banks of the Ohio and the Mississippi become the fellow citizens and neighbors of those who cultivate the hills of New England.[1] We have a commerce that leaves no sea unexplored, navies which take no law from superior force, revenues adequate to all the exigencies of government, almost without taxation, and peace with all nations, founded on equal rights and mutual respect.

Europe, within the same period, has been agitated by a mighty revolution [2] which, while it has been felt in the individual condition and happiness of almost every man, has shaken to the center her political fabric, and dashed against one another thrones which had stood tranquil for ages. On this our continent, our own example has been followed, and colonies have sprung up to be nations. Unaccustomed sounds of liberty and free government have reached us from beyond the track of the sun; [3] and at this moment the dominion of European power in this continent,[4] from the place where we stand to the south pole, is annihilated forever.

In the mean time, both in Europe and America, such has been the general progress of knowledge, such the improvement in legislation, in commerce, in the arts, in letters, and, above all, in liberal ideas and the general spirit of the age, that the whole world seems changed.

[1] This has been more than realized by the introduction of railroads, making the people even of the Pacific coast neighbors of the people of New England. Edward Everett mentions as an interesting circumstance, the fact that the first railroad on the Western continent was built for the purpose of aiding in the erection of this monument. It was a horse railroad from Quincy to Boston, and was used for transporting the blocks of granite from the quarries.

[2] The French Revolution and the wars resulting from it.

[3] The allusion is to the then recent establishment of republican governments in South America.

[4] The Monroe Doctrine, enunciated by President Monroe in his message to Congress in 1823, was virtually a declaration that no European power should be permitted to secure further dominion on the American continent.

Yet, notwithstanding that this is but a faint abstract of the things which have happened since the day of the battle of Bunker Hill, we are but fifty years removed from it; and we now stand here to enjoy all the blessings of our own condition, and to look abroad on the brightened prospects of the world, while we still have among us some of those who were active agents in the scenes of 1775, and who are now here, from every quarter of New England,[1] to visit once more, and under circumstances so affecting, — I had almost said so overwhelming, — this renowned theater of their courage and patriotism.

VENERABLE MEN, you have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives, that you might behold this joyous day. You are now where you stood fifty years ago this very hour, with your brothers and your neighbors, shoulder to shoulder, in the strife for your country. Behold, how altered! The same heavens are indeed over your heads; the same ocean rolls at your feet: but all else how changed! You hear now no roar of hostile cannon, you see no mixed volumes of smoke and flame rising from burning Charlestown. The ground strewed with the dead and the dying; the impetuous charge; the steady and successful repulse; the loud call to repeated assault; the summoning of all that is manly to repeated resistance; a thousand bosoms freely and fearlessly bared in an instant to whatever of terror there may be in war and death, — all these you have witnessed, but you witness them no more. All is peace. The heights of yonder metropolis,[2] its towers and roofs, — which you then saw filled with wives and children and countrymen in distress and terror, and looking with unutterable emotions for the issue of the combat, — have presented you to-day with the sight of its whole happy population come out to welcome and greet you with a universal jubilee. Yonder proud ships, by a

[1] There were nearly two hundred of them, forty of whom had been in the battle of Bunker Hill.

[2] Boston.

felicity of position appropriately lying at the foot of this mount,[1] and seeming fondly to cling around it, are not means of annoyance to you, but your country's own means of distinction and defense. All is peace; and God has granted you this sight of your country's happiness ere you slumber in the grave. He has allowed you to behold and to partake the reward of your patriotic toils; and he has allowed us, your sons and countrymen, to meet you here, and in the name of the present generation, in the name of your country, in the name of liberty, to thank you.

But, alas! you are not all here. Time and the sword have thinned your ranks. Prescott, Putnam, Stark, Brooks, Read, Pomeroy, Bridge, — our eyes seek for you in vain amid this broken band. You are gathered to your fathers, and live only to your country in her grateful remembrance and your own bright example. But let us not too much grieve that you have met the common fate of men. You lived at least long enough to know that your work had been nobly and successfully accomplished. You lived to see your country's independence established, and to sheathe your swords from war. On the light of Liberty you saw arise the light of Peace, like

> "Another morn,
> Risen on mid noon;"[2]

and the sky on which you closed your eyes was cloudless.

But ah! him, the first great martyr[3] in this great cause; him, the premature victim of his own self-devoting heart; him, the head of our civil councils and the destined leader of our military bands, whom nothing brought hither but the unquenchable fire of his own spirit; him, cut off by Providence

[1] The United States Navy Yard at Charlestown is situated at the base of Bunker Hill.

[2] Paradise Lost, v. 310.

[3] Gen. Joseph Warren, born in 1741, was a man of fine culture and unusual promise. He had been elected president of the Provincial Congress, and was one of the most ardent patriots of the time.

in the hour of overwhelming anxiety and thick gloom, falling ere he saw the star of his country rise, pouring out his generous blood like water before he knew whether it would fertilize a land of freedom or of bondage, — how shall I struggle with the emotions that stifle the utterance of thy name! Our poor work may perish; but thine shall endure. This monument may molder away; the solid ground it rests upon may sink down to a level with the sea: but thy memory shall not fail. Whereso-ever among men a heart shall be found that beats to the transports of patriotism and liberty, its aspirations shall be to claim kindred with thy spirit.

But the scene amidst which we stand does not permit us to confine our thoughts or our sympathies to those fearless spirits who hazarded or lost their lives on this consecrated spot. We have the happiness to rejoice here in the presence of a most worthy representation of the survivors of the whole Revolutionary army.

VETERANS, you are the remnant of many a well-fought field. You bring with you marks of honor from Trenton and Monmouth, from Yorktown, Camden, Bennington, and Saratoga. VETERANS OF HALF A CENTURY, when in your youthful days you put everything at hazard in your country's cause, — good as that cause was, and sanguine as youth is, — still your fondest hopes did not stretch onward to an hour like this. At a period to which you could not reasonably have expected to arrive, at a moment of national prosperity such as you could never have foreseen, you are now met here to enjoy the fellowship of old soldiers, and to receive the overflowings of a universal gratitude.

But your agitated countenances and your heaving breasts inform me that even this is not an unmixed joy. I perceive that a tumult of contending feelings rushes upon you. The images of the dead, as well as the persons of the living, present themselves before you. The scene overwhelms you, and I turn from it. May the Father of all mercies smile upon your declining years, and bless them! And when you shall here have ex-

changed your embraces, when you shall once more have pressed the hands which have been so often extended to give succor in adversity, or grasped in the exultation of victory, then look abroad upon this lovely land which your young valor defended, and mark the happiness with which it is filled; yea, look abroad upon the whole earth, and see what a name you have contributed to give to your country, and what a praise you have added to freedom, and then rejoice in the sympathy and gratitude which beam upon your last days from the improved condition of mankind!

The occasion does not require of me any particular account of the battle of the 17th of June, 1775, nor any detailed narrative of the events which immediately preceded it. These are familiarly known to all. In the progress of the great and interesting controversy, Massachusetts and the town of Boston had become early and marked objects of the displeasure of the British Parliament. This had been manifested in the act for altering the government of the Province, and in that for shutting up the port of Boston.[1] Nothing sheds more honor on our early history, and nothing better shows how little the feelings and sentiments of the Colonies were known or regarded in England, than the impression which these measures everywhere produced in America. It had been anticipated that, while the Colonies in general would be terrified by the severity of the punishment inflicted on Massachusetts, the other seaports would be governed by a mere spirit of gain; and that, as Boston was now cut off from all commerce, the unexpected advantage which this blow on her was calculated to confer on other towns would be greedily enjoyed. How miserably such reasoners deceived themselves! How little they knew of the depth and the strength and the intenseness of that feeling of resistance to illegal acts of power which possessed the whole American people! Everywhere the unworthy boon was

[1] The Boston Port Bill, passed by the British Parliament in 1774, declared that port to be closed, and transferred the seat of colonial government to Salem.

rejected with scorn. The fortunate occasion was seized everywhere, to show to the whole world that the Colonies were swayed by no local interest, no partial interest, no selfish interest. The temptation to profit by the punishment of Boston was strongest to our neighbors of Salem. Yet Salem was precisely the place where this miserable proffer was spurned in a tone of the most lofty self-respect and the most indignant patriotism. "We are deeply affected," said its inhabitants, "with the sense of our public calamities; but the miseries that are now rapidly hastening on our brethren in the capital of the Province greatly excite our commiseration. By shutting up the port of Boston, some imagine that the course of trade might be turned hither and to our benefit; but we must be dead to every idea of justice, lost to all feelings of humanity, could we indulge a thought to seize on wealth, and raise our fortunes, on the ruin of our suffering neighbors." These noble sentiments were not confined to our immediate vicinity. In that day of general affection and brotherhood, the blow given to Boston smote on every patriotic heart from one end of the country to the other. Virginia and the Carolinas, as well as Connecticut and New Hampshire, felt and proclaimed the cause to be their own. The Continental Congress, then holding its first session in Philadelphia, expressed its sympathy for the suffering inhabitants of Boston; and addresses were received from all quarters assuring them that the cause was a common one, and should be met by common efforts and common sacrifices. The Congress of Massachusetts responded to these assurances; and in an address to the Congress at Philadelphia, bearing the official signature (perhaps among the last) of the immortal Warren, notwithstanding the severity of its suffering and the magnitude of the dangers which threatened it, it was declared that this Colony "is ready at all times to spend and to be spent in the cause of America."

But the hour drew nigh which was to put professions to the proof, and to determine whether the authors of these mutual pledges were ready to seal them in blood. The tidings of Lex-

ington and Concord had no sooner spread than it was universally felt that the time was at last come for action. A spirit pervaded all ranks, not transient, not boisterous, but deep, solemn, determined,

"Totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet."[1]

War on their own soil and at their own doors was, indeed, a strange work to the yeomanry of New England; but their consciences were convinced of its necessity, their country called them to it, and they did not withhold themselves from the perilous trial. The ordinary occupations of life were abandoned; the plow was stayed in the unfinished furrow; wives gave up their husbands, and mothers gave up their sons, to the battles of a civil war. Death might come, in honor, on the field; it might come, in disgrace, on the scaffold: for either and for both they were prepared. The sentiment of Quincy[2] was full in their hearts. "Blandishments," said that distinguished son of genius and patriotism, "will not fascinate us, nor will threats of a halter intimidate; for, under God, we are determined that wheresoever, whensoever, or howsoever we shall be called to make our exit, we will die free men."

The 17th of June saw the four New-England Colonies[3] standing here side by side to triumph or to fall together; and there was with them, from that moment to the end of the war, what I hope will remain with them forever, one cause, one country, one heart.

The battle of Bunker Hill was attended with the most impor-

[1] Æneid, Lib. VI. 725, William Morris's translation: —

"One soul is shed through all,
That quickeneth all the mass, and with the mighty thing is blent."

[2] Josiah Quincy, Jr. (born in 1744; died at sea, 1775), was one of the most energetic opponents of British usurpation, and with Warren and James Otis exerted an early and very great influence in favor of the freedom of the American Colonies.

[3] Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut.

tant effects beyond its immediate results as a military engagement. It created at once a state of open, public war. There could now be no longer a question of proceeding against individuals as guilty of treason or rebellion. That fearful crisis was past. The appeal lay to the sword; and the only question was, whether the spirit and the resources of the people would hold out till the object should be accomplished. Nor were its general consequences confined to our own country. The previous proceedings of the Colonies, their appeals, resolutions, and addresses, had made their cause known to Europe. Without boasting, we may say that in no age or country has the public cause been maintained with more force of argument, more power of illustration, or more of that persuasion which excited feeling and elevated principle can alone bestow, than the Revolutionary state papers exhibit. These papers will forever deserve to be studied, not only for the spirit which they breathe, but for the ability with which they were written.

To this able vindication of their cause, the Colonies had now added a practical and severe proof of their own true devotion to it, and given evidence also of the power which they could bring to its support. All now saw that, if America fell, she would not fall without a struggle. Men felt sympathy and regard, as well as surprise, when they beheld these infant states, remote, unknown, unaided, encounter the power of England, and, in the first considerable battle, leave more of their enemies dead on the field, in proportion to the number of combatants,[1] than had been recently known to fall in the wars of Europe.

Information of these events, circulating throughout the world, at length reached the ears of one who now hears me.[2] He has

[1] There were engaged in the battle about 1,500 Americans and 2,500 British. The losses of the Americans were 115 killed, 305 wounded, 30 captured: total 450. The British lost 206 killed, 828 wounded: total 1,054.

[2] "Among the earliest of the arrangements for the celebration of the 17th of June, 1825, was the invitation to Gen. Lafayette to be present; and he had so timed his progress through the other States as to return to Massachusetts in season for the great occasion."—EVERETT.

not forgotten the emotion which the fame of Bunker Hill and the name of Warren excited in his youthful breast.

SIR, we are assembled to commemorate the establishment of great public principles of liberty, and to do honor to the distinguished dead. The occasion is too severe for eulogy of the living. But, sir, your interesting relation to this country, the peculiar circumstances which surround you and surround us, call on me to express the happiness which we derive from your presence and aid in this solemn commemoration.

Fortunate, fortunate man!—with what measure of devotion will you not thank God for the circumstances of your extraordinary life! You are connected with both hemispheres and with two generations. Heaven saw fit to ordain that the electric spark of liberty should be conducted, through you, from the New World to the Old; and we who are now here to perform this duty of patriotism have all of us long ago received it in charge from our fathers to cherish your name and your virtues. You will account it an instance of your good fortune, sir, that you crossed the seas to visit us at a time which enables you to be present at this solemnity.[1] You now behold the field the renown of which reached you in the heart of France, and caused a thrill in your ardent bosom. You see the lines of the little redoubt thrown up by the incredible diligence of Prescott, defended to the last extremity by his lion-hearted valor, and within which the corner stone of our monument has now taken its position. You see where Warren fell, and where Parker, Gardner, McCleary, Moore, and other early patriots fell with him. Those who survived that day, and whose lives have been prolonged to the present hour, are now around you. Some of them you have known in the trying scenes of the war. Behold! they now

[1] Gen. Lafayette made a tour of the United States as the "nation's guest" in 1824–25. His name stood at the head of the subscriptions for the Bunker Hill Monument; and he wrote, "In all my travels through the country, I have made Bunker Hill my polestar."

stretch forth their feeble arms to embrace you. Behold! they raise their trembling voices to invoke the blessing of God on you and yours forever.

Sir, you have assisted us in laying the foundation of this structure. You have heard us rehearse, with our feeble commendation, the names of departed patriots. Monuments and eulogy belong to the dead.[1] We give them this day to Warren and his associates. On other occasions they have been given to your more immediate companions in arms, to Washington, to Greene, to Gates, to Sullivan, and to Lincoln. We have become reluctant to grant these, our highest and last honors, further. We would gladly hold them yet back from the little remnant of that immortal band. *Serus in cœlum redeas.*[2] Illustrious as are your merits, yet far, oh, very far distant be the day[3] when any inscription shall bear your name, or any tongue pronounce its eulogy!

The leading reflection to which this occasion seems to invite us respects the great changes which have happened in the fifty years since the battle of Bunker Hill was fought. And it peculiarly marks the character of the present age, that, in looking at these changes and in estimating their effect on our condition, we are obliged to consider, not what has been done in our own country only, but in others also. In these interesting times, while nations are making separate and individual advances in improvement, they make, too, a common progress, like vessels on a common tide, propelled by the gales at different rates, according to their several structure and management, but all moved forward by one mighty current, strong enough to bear onward whatever does not sink beneath it.

[1] "The thrilling eloquence of the address to the old soldiers of Bunker Hill, and of the apostrophe to Warren, and the superb reservation of eulogy with which he spoke of and to Gen. Lafayette, were perhaps unequaled, surely never surpassed, by Webster on any other occasion."—TICKNOR: *Life of Webster*, ii. p. 252.

[2] "Late into heaven may you return."—HORACE, I. ii. 45.

[3] Lafayette died May 20, 1834.

A chief distinction of the present day is a community of opinions and knowledge amongst men in different nations, existing in a degree heretofore unknown. Knowledge has in our time triumphed, and is triumphing, over distance, over difference of languages, over diversity of habits, over prejudice, and over bigotry. The civilized and Christian world is fast learning the great lesson, that difference of nation does not imply necessary hostility, and that all contact need not be war. The whole world is becoming a common field for intellect to act in. Energy of mind, genius, power, wheresoever it exists may speak out in any tongue, and the *world* will hear it. A great chord of sentiment and feeling runs through two continents, and vibrates over both. Every breeze wafts intelligence from country to country; every wave rolls it; all give it forth, and all in turn receive it. There is a vast commerce of ideas; there are marts and exchanges for intellectual discoveries, and a wonderful fellowship of those individual intelligences which make up the mind and opinion of the age. Mind is the great lever of all things; human thought is the process by which human ends are ultimately answered; and the diffusion of knowledge, so astonishing in the last half century, has rendered innumerable minds, variously gifted by nature, competent to be competitors or fellow workers on the theater of intellectual operation.

From these causes, important improvements have taken place in the personal condition of individuals. Generally speaking, mankind are not only better fed and better clothed, but they are able also to enjoy more leisure; they possess more refinement and more self-respect. A superior tone of education, manners, and habits, prevails. This remark, most true in its application to our own country, is also partly true when applied elsewhere. It is proved by the vastly augmented consumption of those articles of manufacture and of commerce which contribute to the comforts and the decencies of life,—an augmentation which has far outrun the progress of population. And while the unexampled and almost incredible use of machinery would seem to supply the

place of labor, labor still finds its occupation and its reward, so wisely has Providence adjusted men's wants and desires to their condition and their capacity.

Any adequate survey, however, of the progress made during the last half century in the polite and the mechanic arts, in machinery and manufactures, in commerce and agriculture, in letters and in science, would require volumes. I must abstain wholly from these subjects, and turn for a moment to the contemplation of what has been done on the great question of politics and government. This is the master topic of the age, and during the whole fifty years it has intensely occupied the thoughts of men. The nature of civil government, its ends and uses, have been canvassed and investigated, ancient opinions attacked and defended, new ideas recommended and resisted, by whatever power the mind of man could bring to the controversy. From the closet and the public halls, the debate has been transferred to the field; and the world has been shaken by wars of unexampled magnitude and the greatest variety of fortune. A day of peace has at length succeeded; and, now that the strife has subsided and the smoke cleared away, we may begin to see what has actually been done permanently changing the state and condition of human society. And, without dwelling on particular circumstances, it is most apparent, that, from the before-mentioned causes of augmented knowledge and improved individual condition, a real, substantial, and important change has taken place, and is taking place, highly favorable, on the whole, to human liberty and human happiness.

The great wheel of political revolution began to move in America. Here its rotation was guarded, regular, and safe. Transferred to the other continent, from unfortunate but natural causes, it received an irregular and violent impulse; it whirled along with a fearful celerity, till at length, like the chariot wheels in the races of antiquity, it took fire from the rapidity of its own motion, and blazed onward, spreading conflagration and terror around.[1]

[1] Alluding to the French Revolution (1793) and the Reign of Terror.

"Dispel this cloud, the light of heaven restore,
Give me TO SEE,— and Ajax asks no more."[1]

We may hope that the growing influence of enlightened sentiment will promote the permanent peace of the world. Wars to maintain family alliances, to uphold or to cast down dynasties, and to regulate successions to thrones, which have occupied so much room in the history of modern times, if not less likely to happen at all, will be less likely to become general and involve many nations, as the great principle shall be more and more established, that the interest of the world is peace, and its first great statute, that every nation possesses the power of establishing a government for itself. But public opinion has attained, also, an influence over governments which do not admit the popular principle into their organization. A necessary respect for the judgment of the world operates, in some measure, as a control over the most unlimited forms of authority. It is owing, perhaps, to this truth, that the interesting struggle of the Greeks[2] has been suffered to go on so long without a direct interference, either to wrest that country from its present masters, or to execute the system of pacification by force, and with united strength lay the neck of Christian and civilized Greek at the foot of the barbarian Turk. Let us thank God that we live in an age when something has influence besides the bayonet, and when the sternest authority does not venture to encounter the scorching power of public reproach. Any attempt of the kind I have mentioned should be met by one universal burst of indignation; the air of the civilized world ought to be made too warm to be comfortably breathed by any one who would hazard it.

It is, indeed, a touching reflection, that while, in the fullness of our country's happiness, we rear this monument to her honor, we

[1] Iliad, XVII. 729, Pope's translation.

[2] The Greek Revolution, against Turkish oppression and for the freedom of Greece, was then in progress. It had begun in 1820, and was terminated, with the success of the patriots, in 1829.

look for instruction in our undertaking to a country which is now in fearful contest, not for works of art or memorials of glory, but for her own existence. Let her be assured that she is not forgotten in the world, that her efforts are applauded, and that constant prayers ascend for her success. And let us cherish a confident hope for her final triumph. If the true spark of religious and civil liberty be kindled, it will burn. Human agency cannot extinguish it. Like the earth's central fire, it may be smothered for a time; the ocean may overwhelm it; mountains may press it down; but its inherent and unconquerable force will heave both the ocean and the land, and at some time or other, in some place or other, the volcano will break out, and flame up to heaven.

Among the great events of the half century we must reckon, certainly, the revolution of South America; [1] and we are not likely to overrate the importance of that revolution, either to the people of the country itself or to the rest of the world. The late Spanish colonies, now independent states, under circumstances less favorable, doubtless, than attended our own Revolution, have yet successfully commenced their national existence. They have accomplished the great object of establishing their independence; they are known and acknowledged in the world: and although in regard to their systems of government, their sentiments on religious toleration, and their provisions for public instruction, they may have yet much to learn, it must be admitted that they have risen to the condition of settled and established states more rapidly than could have been reasonably anticipated. They already furnish an exhilarating example of the difference between free governments and despotic misrule. Their commerce, at this moment, creates a new activity in all the great marts of the world. They show themselves able, by an exchange of commodities, to bear a useful part in the intercourse of nations.

[1] The revolution of the South American colonies was at that time an event of but recent occurrence. It began in 1810, and ended in 1824, when Bolivia, the last of the Spanish colonies, was acknowledged independent.

A new spirit of enterprise and industry begins to prevail; all the great interests of society receive a salutary impulse; and the progress of information not only testifies to an improved condition, but itself constitutes the highest and most essential improvement.

When the battle of Bunker Hill was fought, the existence of South America was scarcely felt in the civilized world. The thirteen little Colonies of North America habitually called themselves the "Continent." Borne down by colonial subjugation, monopoly, and bigotry, these vast regions of the South were hardly visible above the horizon. But in our day there has been, as it were, a new creation. The southern hemisphere emerges from the sea. Its lofty mountains begin to lift themselves into the light of heaven; its broad and fertile plains stretch out in beauty to the eye of civilized man; and at the mighty bidding of the voice of political liberty the waters of darkness retire.

And now let us indulge an honest exultation in the conviction of the benefit which the example of our country has produced, and is likely to produce, on human freedom and human happiness. Let us endeavor to comprehend in all its magnitude, and to feel in all its importance, the part assigned to us in the great drama of human affairs. We are placed at the head of the system of representative and popular governments. Thus far our example shows that such governments are compatible, not only with respectability and power, but with repose, with peace, with security of personal rights, with good laws, and a just administration.

We are not propagandists. Wherever other systems are preferred, either as being thought better in themselves, or as better suited to existing condition, we leave the preference to be enjoyed. Our history hitherto proves, however, that the popular form is practicable, and that with wisdom and knowledge men may govern themselves; and the duty incumbent on us is to

preserve the consistency of this cheering example, and take care that nothing may weaken its authority with the world. If, in our case, the representative system ultimately fail, popular governments must be pronounced impossible. No combination of circumstances more favorable to the experiment can ever be expected to occur. The last hopes of mankind, therefore, rest with us; and if it should be proclaimed that our example had become an argument against the experiment, the knell of popular liberty would be sounded throughout the earth.

These are excitements to duty, but they are not suggestions of doubt. Our history and our condition, all that is gone before us, and all that surrounds us, authorize the belief that popular governments, though subject to occasional variations, in form perhaps not always for the better, may yet, in their general character, be as durable and permanent as other systems. We know, indeed, that in our country any other is impossible. The *principle* of free governments adheres to the American soil. It is bedded in it, immovable as its mountains.

And let the sacred obligations which have devolved on this generation and on us sink deep into our hearts. Those who established our liberty and our government are daily dropping from among us. The great trust now descends to new hands. Let us apply ourselves to that which is presented to us as our appropriate object. We can win no laurels in a war for independence. Earlier and worthier hands have gathered them all. Nor are there places for us by the side of Solon [1] and Alfred [2] and other founders of states. Our fathers have filled them. But there remains to us a great duty of defense and preservation; and there is opened to us, also, a noble pursuit to which the spirit of the times strongly invites us. Our proper business

[1] Solon, the most famous of the lawgivers of ancient Greece (born about 638 B.C.), established a new code of laws for Athens.

[2] King Alfred the Great, of England (849–901), reduced the Anglo-Saxon laws to a system, and made great improvements in the administration of justice. He is sometimes regarded as the founder of the English monarchy.

is improvement. Let our age be the age of improvement. a day of peace, let us advance the arts of peace and the wo of peace. Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interes and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not p form something worthy to be remembered. Let us cultivat true spirit of union and harmony. In pursuing the great obje which our condition points out to us, let us act under a settl conviction and an habitual feeling, that these twenty-four Sta are one country. Let our conceptions be enlarged to the cir of our duties. Let us extend our ideas over the whole of t vast field in which we are called to act. Let our object be, o COUNTRY, OUR WHOLE COUNTRY, AND NOTHING BUT OUR COU TRY. And, by the blessing of God, may that country its become a vast and splendid monument, not of oppression a terror, but of Wisdom, of Peace, and of Liberty, upon whi the world may gaze with admiration forever!

THE COMPLETION OF THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED ON BUNKER HILL, ON THE 17TH OF JUNE, 1843, ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE MONUMENT.

A DUTY has been performed. A work of gratitude and patriotism is completed. This structure, having its foundations in soil which drank deep of early Revolutionary blood, has at length reached its destined height, and now lifts its summit to the skies.

We have assembled to celebrate the accomplishment of this undertaking, and to indulge afresh in the recollection of the great event which it is designed to commemorate. Eighteen years, more than half the ordinary duration of a generation of mankind, have elapsed since the corner stone of this monument was laid. The hopes of its projectors rested on voluntary contributions, private munificence, and the general favor of the public. These hopes have not been disappointed. Donations have been made by individuals, in some cases of large amount; and smaller sums have been contributed by thousands. All who regard the object itself as important, and its accomplishment, therefore, as a good attained, will entertain sincere respect and gratitude for the unwearied efforts of the successive presidents, boards of directors, and committees of the Association which has had the general control of the work. The architect, equally entitled to

our thanks and commendation, will find other reward, also, f his labor and skill, in the beauty and elegance of the obeli itself, and the distinction which, as a work of art, it confers upc him.

At a period when the prospects of further progress in t undertaking were gloomy and discouraging, the Mechanic Ass ciation, by a most praiseworthy and vigorous effort, raised ne funds for carrying it forward, and saw them applied with fidelit economy, and skill. It is a grateful duty to make public acknow edgments of such timely and efficient aid.

The last effort and the last contribution were from a differe source. Garlands of grace and elegance were destined to crow a work which had its commencement in manly patriotism. T winning power of the sex addressed itself to the public, and a that was needed to carry the monument to its proposed heigh and to give to it its finish, was promptly supplied. The mothe and the daughters of the land contributed thus, most successfull to whatever there is of beauty in the monument itself, or wha ever of utility and public benefit and gratification there is in i completion.

Of those with whom the plan originated, of erecting on th spot a monument worthy of the event to be commemorate many are now present; but others, alas! have themselves b come subjects of monumental inscription. William Tudor—a accomplished scholar, a distinguished writer, a most amiab man, allied both by birth and sentiment to the patriots of t Revolution—died while on public service abroad, and now li buried in a foreign land.[1] William Sullivan—a name fragrant Revolutionary merit and of public service and public virtue, wh himself partook in a high degree of the respect and confiden of the community, and yet was always most loved where be known—has also been gathered to his fathers. And last, Geor Blake—a lawyer of learning and eloquence, a man of wit and

[1] William Tudor died at Rio de Janeiro, while *Chargé d'Affaires* of t United States, in 1830. See Introduction.

lent, of social qualities the most agreeable and fascinating, and gifts which enabled him to exercise large sway over public assemblies—has closed his human career.[1] I know that in the crowds before me there are those from whose eyes tears will flow at the mention of these names. But such mention is due to their general character, their public and private virtues, and especially, on this occasion, to the spirit and zeal with which they entered into the undertaking which is now completed.

I have spoken only of those who are no longer numbered with the living. But a long life, now drawing towards its close, always distinguished by acts of public spirit, humanity, and charity, forming a character which has already become historical, and sanctified by public regard and the affection of friends, may confer even on the living the proper immunity of the dead, and be the fit subject of honorable mention and warm commendation. Of the early projectors of the design of this monument, one of the most prominent, the most zealous, and the most efficient, is Thomas H. Perkins.[2] It was beneath his ever hospitable roof that those whom I have mentioned, and others yet living and now present, having assembled for the purpose, adopted the first step towards erecting a monument on Bunker Hill. Long may he remain, with unimpaired faculties, in the wide field of his usefulness! His charities have distilled like the dews of heaven; he has fed the hungry, and clothed the naked; he has given sight to the blind: and for such virtues there is a reward on high of which all human memorials, all language of brass and stone, are but humble types and attempted imitations.

Time and nature have had their course in diminishing the number of those whom we met here on the 17th of June, 1825. Most of the Revolutionary characters then present have since

[1] William Sullivan died in Boston in 1839, George Blake, in 1841; both gentlemen of great political and legal eminence.

[2] Thomas Handasyd Perkins, a distinguished merchant and philanthropist of Boston, founder of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind. He died Jan. 11, 1854.

deceased; and Lafayette sleeps in his native land. Yet the name and blood of Warren are with us; the kindred of Putnam are also here; and near me, universally beloved for his character and his virtues, and now venerable for his years, sits the son of the noble-hearted and daring Prescott.[1] Gideon Foster of Danvers, Enos Reynolds of Boxford, Phineas Johnson, Robert Andrews, Elijah Dresser, Josiah Cleaveland, Jesse Smith, Philip Bagley, Needham Maynard, Roger Plaisted, Joseph Stephens, Nehemiah Porter, and James Harvey, who bore arms for their country, either at Concord and Lexington on the 19th of April, or on Bunker Hill, all now far advanced in age, have come here to-day to look once more on the field where their valor was proved, and to receive a hearty outpouring of our respect.

They have long outlived the troubles and dangers of the Revolution; they have outlived the evils arising from the want of a united and efficient government; they have outlived the menace of imminent dangers to the public liberty; they have outlived nearly all their contemporaries: but they have not outlived, they cannot outlive, the affectionate gratitude of their country. Heaven has not allotted to this generation an opportunity of rendering high services, and manifesting strong personal devotion, such as they rendered and manifested, and in such a cause as that which roused the patriotic fires of their youthful breasts, and nerved the strength of their arms. But we may praise what we cannot equal, and celebrate actions which we were not born to perform. *Pulchrum est benefacere reipublicæ, etiam benedicere haud absurdum est.*

The Bunker Hill Monument is finished. Here it stands. Fortunate in the high natural eminence on which it is placed, higher, infinitely higher, in its objects and purpose, it rises over the land and over the sea; and, visible at their homes to three hundred thousand of the people of Massachusetts, it stands a memorial of the last, and a monitor to the present, and to all succeeding

[1] "William Prescott (since deceased, in 1844), son of Col. William Prescott, who commanded on the 17th of June, 1775, and father of William H. Prescott, the historian." — EVERETT.

ations. I have spoken of the loftiness of its purpose. If l been without any other design than the creation of a work , the granite of which it is composed would have slept in tive bed. It has a purpose, and that purpose gives it its cter. That purpose enrobes it with dignity and moral leur. That well-known purpose it is which causes us to up to it with a feeling of awe. It is itself the orator of this ion. It is not from my lips, it could not be from any hu- lips, that that strain of eloquence is this day to flow most etent to move and excite the vast multitudes around me. powerful speaker stands motionless before us.[1] It is a plain . It bears no inscriptions, fronting to the rising sun, from 1 the future antiquary shall wipe the dust. Nor does the ; sun cause tones of music to issue from its summit. But e rising of the sun and at the setting of the sun, in the of noonday, and beneath the milder effulgence of lunar it looks, it speaks, it acts, to the full comprehension of American mind, and the awakening of glowing enthusiasm ery American heart. Its silent but awful utterance; its pathos as it brings to our contemplation the 17th of June, , and the consequences which have resulted to us, to our try, and to the world, from the events of that day, and which now must continue to rain influence on the destinies of man- to the end of time; the elevation with which it raises us high e the ordinary feelings of life,—surpass all that the study of loset, or even the inspiration of genius, can produce. To-day aks to us: its future auditories will be the successive gen- ons of men as they rise up before it and gather around it. peech will be of patriotism and courage, of civil and religious y, of free government, of the moral improvement and eleva- of mankind, and of the immortal memory of those who, with c devotion, have sacrificed their lives for their country.

t is related that at this point in his speech the orator was interrupted by ıtaneous burst of applause from his hearers, and that such was their siasm, that it was several moments before he could proceed.

In the older world, numerous fabrics still exist, reared by hu man hands, but whose object has been lost in the darkness o ages. They are now monuments of nothing but the labor an skill which constructed them.

The mighty Pyramid itself, half buried in the sands of Africa, ha nothing to bring down and report to us but the power of kin and the servitude of the people. If it had any purpose beyon that of a mausoleum, such purpose has perished from history an from tradition. If asked for its moral object, its admonition, i sentiment, its instruction to mankind, or any high end in its ere tion, it is silent, — silent as the millions which lie in the dust at i base, and in the catacombs which surround it. Without a ju moral object, therefore, made known to man, though raise against the skies, it excites only conviction of power mixed wit strange wonder. But if the civilization of the present race o men — founded as it is in solid science, the true knowledge o nature, and vast discoveries in art, and which is elevated an purified by moral sentiment and by the truths of Christianity — b not destined to destruction before the final termination of huma existence on earth, the object and purpose of this edifice will b known till that hour shall come. And even if civilization shoul be subverted, and the truths of the Christian religion obscure by a new deluge of barbarism, the memory of Bunker Hill an the American Revolution will still be elements and parts of th knowledge which shall be possessed by the last man to whon the light of civilization and Christianity shall be extended.

This celebration is honored by the presence of the chief execu tive magistrate of the Union. An occasion so national in i object and character, and so much connected with that Revolu tion from which the government sprang at the head of which h is placed, may well receive from him this mark of attention an respect. Well acquainted with Yorktown,[1] the scene of the la

[1] President Tyler was a native of Virginia, and his birthplace was with less than forty miles of Yorktown The surrender of the British army und Cornwallis, at Yorktown, occurred Oct. 19, 1781.

great military struggle of the Revolution, his eye now surveys the field of Bunker Hill, the theater of the first of those important conflicts. He sees where Warren fell, where Putnam and Prescott and Stark and Knowlton and Brooks fought. He beholds the spot where a thousand trained soldiers of England were smitten to the earth, in the first effort of revolutionary war, by the arm of a bold and determined yeomanry contending for liberty and their country. And while all assembled here entertain towards him sincere personal good wishes and the high respect due to his elevated office and station, it is not to be doubted that he enters with true American feeling into the patriotic enthusiasm kindled by the occasion which animates the multitudes that surround him.

His Excellency the Governor of the Commonwealth, the Governor of Rhode Island, and the other distinguished public men whom we have the honor to receive as visitors and guests to-day, will cordially unite in a celebration connected with the great event of the Revolutionary War.

No name in the history of 1775 and 1776 is more distinguished than that borne by an ex-president of the United States,[1] whom we expected to see here, but whose ill health prevents his attendance. Whenever popular rights were to be asserted, an Adams was present; and when the time came for the formal Declaration of Independence, it was the voice of an Adams that shook the halls of Congress. We wish we could have welcomed to us this day the inheritor of Revolutionary blood, and the just and worthy representative of high Revolutionary names, merit, and services.

Banners and badges, processions and flags, announce to us that amidst this uncounted throng are thousands of natives of New England now residents in other States. Welcome, ye kindred names, with kindred blood! From the broad savannas[2] of the South, from the newer regions of the West, from amidst

[1] John Quincy Adams (1767–1848), the sixth President of the United States (1825–29).

[2] Plains, or meadows.

the hundreds of thousands of men of Eastern origin who cultivate the rich valley of the Genesee, or live along the chain of the Lakes, from the mountains of Pennsylvania, and from the thronged cities of the coast, welcome, welcome! Wherever else you may be strangers, here you are all at home. You assemble at this shrine of liberty, near the family altars at which your earliest devotions were paid to Heaven, near to the temples of worship first entered by you, and near to the schools and colleges in which your education was received. You come hither with a glorious ancestry of liberty. You bring names which are on the rolls of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill. You come, some of you, once more to be embraced by an aged Revolutionary father, or to receive another, perhaps a last, blessing, bestowed in love and tears, by a mother, yet surviving to witness and to enjoy your prosperity and happiness.

But if family associations and the recollections of the past bring you hither with greater alacrity, and mingle with your greeting much of local attachment and private affection, greeting also be given, free and hearty greeting, to every American citizen who treads this sacred soil with patriotic feeling, and respires with pleasure in an atmosphere perfumed with the recollections of 1775! This occasion is respectable,[1] nay, it is grand, it is sublime, by the nationality of its sentiment. Among the seventeen millions of happy people who form the American community, there is not one who has not an interest in this monument, as there is not one that has not a deep and abiding interest in that which it commemorates.

Woe betide the man who brings to this day's worship feeling less than wholly American! Woe betide the man who can stand here with the fires of local resentments burning, or the purpose of fomenting local jealousies and the strifes of local interests festering and rankling in his heart! Union, established in justice, in patriotism, and the most plain and obvious common interest;

[1] This is a favorite word with Webster, and he often gives to it an unusual significance.

union, founded on the same love of liberty, cemented by blood shed in the same common cause, — union has been the source of all our glory and greatness thus far, and is the ground of all our highest hopes. This column stands on union. I know not that it might not keep its position if the American Union, in the mad conflict of human passions, and in the strife of parties and factions, should be broken up and destroyed. I know not that it would totter and fall to the earth, and mingle its fragments with the fragments of Liberty and the Constitution, when State should be separated from State, and faction and dismemberment obliterate forever all the hopes of the founders of our Republic and the great inheritance of their children. It might stand. But who, from beneath the weight of mortification and shame that would oppress him, could look up to behold it? Whose eyeballs would not be seared by such a spectacle? For my part, should I live to such a time, I shall avert my eyes from it forever.

It is not as a mere military encounter of hostile armies that the battle of Bunker Hill presents its principal claim to attention. Yet, even as a mere battle, there were circumstances attending it extraordinary in character, and entitling it to peculiar distinction. It was fought on this eminence, in the neighborhood of yonder city, in the presence of many more spectators than there were combatants in the conflict. Men, women, and children, from every commanding position, were gazing at the battle, and looking for its results with all the eagerness natural to those who knew that the issue was fraught with the deepest consequences to themselves personally, as well as to their country. Yet on the 16th of June, 1775, there was nothing around this hill but verdure and culture. There was, indeed, the note of awful preparation in Boston. There was the Provincial army at Cambridge, with its right flank resting on Dorchester, and its left on Chelsea. But here all was peace. Tranquillity reigned around. On the 17th, everything was changed. On this eminence had arisen, in the night, a redoubt, built by Prescott, and in which he held command. Perceived by the enemy at dawn, it was immediately

cannonaded from the floating batteries in the river, and from the opposite shore. And then ensued the hurried movement in Boston, and soon the troops of Britain embarked in the attempt to dislodge the colonists. In an hour everything indicated an immediate and bloody conflict. Love of liberty on one side, proud defiance of rebellion on the other, hopes and fears, and courage and daring, on both sides, animated the hearts of the combatants as they hung on the edge of battle.

I suppose it would be difficult, in a military point of view, to ascribe to the leaders on either side any just motive for the engagement which followed. On the one hand, it could not have been very important to the Americans to attempt to hem the British within the town, by advancing one single post a quarter of a mile; while, on the other hand, if the British found it essential to dislodge the American troops, they had it in their power at no expense of life. By moving up their ships and batteries, they could have completely cut off all communication with the mainland over the Neck, and the forces in the redoubt would have been reduced to a state of famine in forty-eight hours.

But that was not the day for any such consideration on either side. Both parties were anxious to try the strength of their arms. The pride of England would not permit the "rebels," as she termed them, to defy her to the teeth; and, without for a moment calculating the cost, the British general determined to destroy the fort immediately. On the other side, Prescott and his gallant followers longed and thirsted for a decisive trial of strength and of courage. They wished a battle, and wished it at once. And this is the true secret of the movements on this hill.

I will not attempt to describe that battle. The cannonading, the landing of the British, their advance, the coolness with which the charge was met, the repulse, the second attack, the second repulse, the burning of Charlestown, and finally the closing assault and the slow retreat of the Americans, — the history of all these is familiar.

But the consequences of the battle of Bunker Hill were greater

than those of any ordinary conflict, although between armies of far greater force, and terminating with more immediate advantage on the one side or the other. It was the first great battle of the Revolution, and not only the first blow, but the blow which determined the contest. It did not, indeed, put an end to the war; but, in the then existing hostile state of feeling, the difficulties could only be referred to the arbitration of the sword. And one thing is certain, — that, after the New-England troops had shown themselves able to face and repulse the regulars, it was decided that peace never could be established but upon the basis of the independence of the Colonies. When the sun of that day went down, the event of independence was no longer doubtful. In a few days Washington heard of the battle, and he inquired if the militia had stood the fire of the regulars. When told that they had not only stood that fire, but reserved their own till the enemy was within eight rods, and then poured it in with tremendous effect, "Then," exclaimed he, "the liberties of the country are safe!"

The consequences of this battle were just of the same importance as the Revolution itself.

If there was nothing of value in the principles of the American Revolution, then there is nothing valuable in the battle of Bunker Hill and its consequences. But if the Revolution was an era in the history of man favorable to human happiness, if it was an event which marked the progress of man all over the world from despotism to liberty, then this monument is not raised without cause. Then the battle of Bunker Hill is not an event undeserving celebrations, commemorations, and rejoicings, now and in all coming times.

What, then, is the true and peculiar principle of the American Revolution, and of the systems of government which it has confirmed and established? The truth is, that the American Revolution was not caused by the instantaneous discovery of principles of government before unheard of, or the practical adoption of political ideas such as had never before entered into the minds

of men. It was but the full development of principles of government, forms of society, and political sentiments, the origin of all which lay back two centuries in English and American history.

The discovery of America, its colonization by the nations of Europe, the history and progress of the Colonies, from their establishment to the time when the principal of them threw off their allegiance to the respective states by which they had been planted, and founded governments of their own, constitute one of the most interesting portions of the annals of man. These events occupied three hundred years, during which period civilization and knowledge made steady progress in the Old World; so that Europe, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, had become greatly changed from that Europe which began the colonization of America at the close of the fifteenth or the commencement of the sixteenth. And what is most material to my present purpose is, that in the progress of the first of these centuries, that is to say, from the discovery of America to the settlements of Virginia and Massachusetts, political and religious events took place which most materially affected the state of society and the sentiments of mankind, especially in England and in parts of Continental Europe. After a few feeble and unsuccessful efforts by England, under Henry VII.,[1] to plant colonies in America, no designs of that kind were prosecuted for a long period, either by the English Government or any of its subjects. Without inquiring into the causes of this delay, its consequences are sufficiently clear and striking. England, in this lapse of a century, unknown to herself, but under the providence of God and the influence of events, was fitting herself for the work of colonizing North America, on such principles, and by such men, as should spread the English name and English blood, in time, over a great portion of the Western hemisphere.

[1] It was during the reign of Henry VII. that John Cabot, under a royal commission, discovered the coast of North America, — a discovery upon which the subsequent claims of the English to jurisdiction on this continent were based.

The commercial spirit was greatly fostered by several laws passed in the reign of Henry VII.; and in the same reign encouragement was given to arts and manufactures in the eastern counties, and some not unimportant modifications of the feudal system took place by allowing the breaking of entails.[1] These and other measures, and other occurrences, were making way for a new class of society to emerge and show itself in a military and feudal age; a middle class, between the barons or great landholders and the retainers of the Crown on the one side, and the tenants of the Crown and barons, and agricultural and other laborers, on the other side. With the rise and growth of this new class of society, not only did commerce and the arts increase, but better education, a greater degree of knowledge, juster notions of the true ends of government, and sentiments favorable to civil liberty, began to spread abroad, and become more and more common. But the plants springing from these seeds were of slow growth. The character of English society had indeed begun to undergo a change; but changes of national character are ordinarily the work of time. Operative causes were, however, evidently in existence, and sure to produce, ultimately, their proper effect. From the accession of Henry VII. to the breaking out of the civil wars,[2] England enjoyed much greater exemption from war, foreign and domestic, than for a long period before, and during the controversy between the houses of York and Lancaster.[3] These years of peace were favorable to commerce and the arts. Commerce and the arts augmented general and individual knowledge; and knowledge is the only fountain, both of the love and the principles of human liberty.

[1] Laws forbidding the owner of an estate to transfer it to any person except the legal heir.

[2] That is, from 1485 to about 1640.

[3] This conflict between the two great families of England, each claiming the right to the royal succession, is known in history as the War of the Roses. It began in 1455, and continued until the death of Richard III. in 1485.

Other powerful causes soon came into active play. The Reformation of Luther[1] broke out, kindling up the minds of men afresh, leading to new habits of thought, and awakening in individuals energies before unknown even to themselves. The religious controversies of this period changed society as well as religion: indeed, it would be easy to prove, if this occasion were proper for it, that they changed society to a considerable extent, where they did not change the religion of the state. They changed man himself, in his modes of thought, his consciousness of his own powers, and his desire of intellectual attainment. The spirit of commercial and foreign adventure, therefore, on the one hand, which had gained so much strength and influence since the time of the discovery of America; and, on the other, the assertion and maintenance of religious liberty, having their source indeed in the Reformation, but continued, diversified, and constantly strengthened by the subsequent divisions of sentiment and opinion among the Reformers themselves; and this love of religious liberty, drawing after it, or bringing along with it, as it always does, an ardent devotion to the principle of civil liberty also,— were the powerful influences under which character was formed, and men trained, for the great work of introducing English civilization, English law, and, what is more than all, Anglo-Saxon blood, into the wilderness of North America. Raleigh[2] and his companions may be considered as the creatures, principally, of the first of these causes. High-spirited, full of the love of personal adventure, excited, too, in some degree, by the hopes of sudden riches from the discovery of mines of the precious metals, and not unwilling to diversify the labors of settling a colony with occasional cruising against the Spaniards in the West Indian seas,

[1] This great religious and political movement, which engaged the attention of a large portion of Europe during the sixteenth century, is so called from Martin Luther, its most distinguished promoter. The Reformation was begun in Switzerland by Zwingli in 1516; in Germany, by Luther in 1517; and in England, by Henry VIII. in 1534.

[2] Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618).

they crossed and recrossed the ocean with a frequency which surprises us when we consider the state of navigation, and which evinces a most daring spirit.

The other cause peopled New England. The "Mayflower" sought our shores under no high-wrought spirit of commercial adventure, no love of gold, no mixture of purpose warlike or hostile to any human being. Like the dove from the ark, she had put forth only to find rest. Solemn supplications on the shore of the sea in Holland had invoked for her, at her departure, the blessings of Providence. The stars which guided her were the unobscured constellations of civil and religious liberty. Her deck was the altar of the living God. Fervent prayers on bended knees mingled, morning and evening, with the voices of ocean and the sighing of the wind in her shrouds. Every prosperous breeze which, gently swelling her sails, helped the Pilgrims onward in their course, awoke new anthems of praise; and when the elements were wrought into fury, neither the tempest, tossing their fragile bark like a feather, nor the darkness and howling of the midnight storm, ever disturbed in man or woman the firm and settled purpose of their souls, to undergo all and to do all that the meekest patience, the boldest resolution, and the highest trust in God, could enable human beings to suffer or to perform.

Some differences may, doubtless, be traced at this day between the descendants of the early colonists of Virginia and those of New England, owing to the different influences and different circumstances under which the respective settlements were made, but only enough to create a pleasing variety in the midst of a general family resemblance.

"Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen; qualis decet sororum."[1]

But the habits, sentiments, and objects of both soon became modified by local causes, growing out of their condition in the

[1] "The features are not the same in all, nor yet very different: they are such as those of sisters ought to be." — OVID.

New World; and as this condition was essentially alike in both and as both at once adopted the same general rules and principles of English jurisprudence, and became accustomed to the authority of representative bodies, these differences gradually diminished. They disappeared by the progress of time and the influence of intercourse. The necessity of some degree of union and coöperation to defend themselves against the savage tribes tended to excite in them mutual respect and regard. They fought together in the wars against France.[1] The great and common cause of the Revolution bound them to one another by new links of brotherhood; and at length the present constitution of government united them, happily and gloriously, to form the great republic of the world, and bound up their interests and fortunes, till the whole earth sees that there is now for them, in present possession as well as in future hope, but "One Country, One Constitution, and One Destiny."

The colonization of the tropical region, and the whole of the southern parts of the continent, by Spain and Portugal, was conducted on other principles, under the influence of other motives and followed by far different consequences. From the time of its discovery, the Spanish Government pushed forward its settlements in America, not only with vigor, but with eagerness; so that, long before the first permanent English settlement had been accomplished in what is now the United States, Spain had conquered Mexico, Peru, and Chile, and stretched her power over nearly all the territory she ever acquired on this continent. The rapidity of these conquests is to be ascribed, in a great degree, to the eagerness, not to say the rapacity, of those numerous bands of adventurers who were stimulated by individual interests and private hopes to subdue immense regions, and take possession of them in the name of the Crown of Spain. The mines of gold and silver were the incitements to these efforts; and accordingly

[1] Known in American history as King William's War (1689–97), Queen Anne's War (1702–13), King George's War (1744–48), and the French and Indian War (1754–63).

settlements were generally made, and Spanish authority established, immediately on the subjugation of territory, that the native population might be set to work by their new Spanish masters in the mines. From these facts, the love of gold — gold not produced by industry, nor accumulated by commerce, but gold dug from its native bed in the bowels of the earth, and that earth ravished from its rightful possessors by every possible degree of enormity, cruelty, and crime — was long the governing passion in Spanish wars and Spanish settlements in America. Even Columbus himself did not wholly escape the influence of this base motive. In his early voyages we find him passing from island to island, inquiring everywhere for gold, as if God had opened the New World to the knowledge of the Old, only to gratify a passion equally senseless and sordid, and to offer up millions of an unoffending race of men to the destruction of the sword, sharpened both by cruelty and rapacity. And yet Columbus was far above his age and country; enthusiastic, indeed, but sober, religious, and magnanimous; born to great things, and capable of high sentiments, as his noble discourse before Ferdinand and Isabella, as well as the whole history of his life, shows. Probably he sacrificed much to the known sentiments of others, and addressed to his followers motives likely to influence them. At the same time, it is evident that he himself looked upon the world which he discovered as a world of wealth all ready to be seized and enjoyed.

The conquerors and the European settlers of Spanish America were mainly military commanders and common soldiers. The monarchy of Spain was not transferred to this hemisphere; but it acted in it, as it acted at home, through its ordinary means and its true representative, military force. The robbery and destruction of the native race was the achievement of standing armies, in the right of the King and by his authority; fighting in his name, for the aggrandizement of his power and the extension of his prerogatives, with military ideas under arbitrary maxims, — a portion of that dreadful instrumentality by which a perfect des-

potism governs a people. As there was no liberty in Spain, how could liberty be transmitted to Spanish colonies?

The colonists of English America were of the people, and a people already free. They were of the middle, industrious, and already prosperous class, the inhabitants of commercial and manufacturing cities, among whom liberty first revived and respired after a sleep of a thousand years in the bosom of the Dark Ages. Spain descended on the New World in the armed and terrible image of her monarchy and her soldiery; England approached it in the winning and popular garb of personal rights, public protection, and civil freedom. England transplanted liberty to America; Spain transplanted power. England, through the agency of private companies and the efforts of individuals, colonized this part of North America by industrious individuals making their own way in the wilderness, defending themselves against the savages, recognizing their right to the soil, and with a general honest purpose of introducing knowledge as well as Christianity among them. Spain stooped on South America like a vulture on its prey. Everything was force. Territories were acquired by fire and sword. Cities were destroyed by fire and sword. Hundreds of thousands of human beings fell by fire and sword. Even conversion to Christianity was attempted by fire and sword.

Behold, then, fellow citizens, the difference resulting from the operation of the two principles! Here, to-day, on the summit of Bunker Hill, and at the foot of this monument, behold the difference! I would that the fifty thousand voices present could proclaim it with a shout which should be heard over the globe. Our inheritance was of liberty, secured and regulated by law, and enlightened by religion and knowledge; that of South America was of power,—stern, unrelenting, tyrannical, military power. And now look to the consequences of the two principles on the general and aggregate happiness of the human race. Behold the result in all the regions conquered by Cortes and Pizarro, and the contrasted results here. I suppose the territory of the United States

may amount to one eighth, or one tenth, of that colonized by Spain on this continent; and yet in all that vast region there are but between one and two millions of people of European color and European blood, while in the United States there are fourteen millions who rejoice in their descent from the people of the more northern part of Europe.

But we may follow the difference in the original principle of colonization, and in its character and objects, still further. We must look to moral and intellectual results; we must consider consequences, not only as they show themselves in hastening or retarding the increase of population and the supply of physical wants, but in their civilization, improvement, and happiness. We must inquire what progress has been made in the true science of liberty, in the knowledge of the great principles of self-government, and in the progress of man as a social, moral, and religious being.

I would not willingly say anything on this occasion discourteous to the new governments founded on the demolition of the power of the Spanish monarchy. They are yet on their trial, and I hope for a favorable result. But truth, sacred truth, and fidelity to the cause of civil liberty, compel me to say, that hitherto they have discovered quite too much of the spirit of that monarchy from which they separated themselves. Quite too frequent resort is made to military force; and quite too much of the substance of the people is consumed in maintaining armies, not for defense against foreign aggression, but for enforcing obedience to domestic authority. Standing armies are the oppressive instruments for governing the people in the hands of hereditary and arbitrary monarchs. A military republic, a government founded on mock elections and supported only by the sword, is a movement indeed, but a retrograde and disastrous movement, from the regular and old-fashioned monarchical systems. If men would enjoy the blessings of republican government, they must govern themselves by reason, by mutual counsel and consultation, by a sense and feeling of general interest, and

by the acquiescence of the minority in the will of the majority, properly expressed; and, above all, the military must be kept, according to the language of our Bill of Rights, in strict subordination to the civil authority. Wherever this lesson is not both learned and practiced, there can be no political freedom. Absurd, preposterous is it, a scoff and a satire on free forms of constitutional liberty, for frames of government to be prescribed by military leaders, and the right of suffrage to be exercised at the point of the sword.

Making all allowance for situation and climate, it cannot be doubted by intelligent minds that the difference now existing between North and South America is justly attributable, in a great degree, to political institutions in the Old World and in the New. And how broad that difference is! Suppose an assembly, in one of the valleys or on the side of one of the mountains of the southern half of the hemisphere, to be held this day in the neighborhood of a large city — what would be the scene presented? Yonder is a volcano, flaming and smoking, but shedding no light, moral or intellectual. At its foot is the mine, sometimes yielding, perhaps, large gains to capital, but in which labor is destined to eternal and unrequited toil, and followed only by penury and beggary. The city is filled with armed men; not a free people, armed and coming forth voluntarily to rejoice in a public festivity, but hireling troops, supported by forced loans, excessive impositions on commerce, or taxes wrung from a half-fed and a half-clothed population. For the great there are palaces covered with gold; for the poor there are hovels of the meanest sort. There is an ecclesiastical hierarchy, enjoying the wealth of princes; but there are no means of education for the people. Do public improvements favor intercourse between place and place? So far from this, the traveler cannot pass from town to town without danger, every mile, of robbery and assassination. I would not overcharge or exaggerate this picture; but its principal features are all too truly sketched.

And how does it contrast with the scene now actually before

us ? Look round upon these fields; they are verdant and beautiful, well cultivated, and at this moment loaded with the riches of the early harvest. The hands which till them are those of the free owners of the soil, enjoying equal rights, and protected by law from oppression and tyranny. Look to the thousand vessels in our sight, filling the harbor, or covering the neighboring sea. They are the vehicles of a profitable commerce, carried on by men who know that the profits of their hardy enterprise, when they make them, are their own; and this commerce is encouraged and regulated by wise laws, and defended, when need be, by the valor and patriotism of the country. Look to that fair city, the abode of so much diffused wealth, so much general happiness and comfort, so much personal independence, and so much general knowledge, and not undistinguished, I may be permitted to add, for hospitality and social refinement. She fears no forced contributions, no siege or sacking from military leaders of rival factions. The hundred temples in which her citizens worship God are in no danger of sacrilege. The regular administration of the laws encounters no obstacle. The long processions of children and youth which you see this day issuing by thousands from her free schools, prove the care and anxiety with which a popular government provides for the education and morals of the people. Everywhere there is order; everywhere there is security. Everywhere the law reaches to the highest, and reaches to the lowest, to protect all in their rights, and to restrain all from wrong; and over all hovers Liberty, — that Liberty for which our fathers fought and fell on this very spot, — with her eye ever watchful and her eagle wing ever wide outspread.

The colonies of Spain, from their origin to their end, were subject to the sovereign authority of the mother country. Their government, as well as their commerce, was a strict home monopoly. If we add to this the established usage of filling important posts in the administration of the colonies exclusively by natives of Old Spain, thus cutting off forever all hopes of honorable preferment from every man born in the Western hemisphere, causes

enough rise up before us at once to account fully for the subsequent history and character of these provinces. The viceroys and provincial governors of Spain were never at home in their governments in America. They did not feel that they were of the people whom they governed. Their official character and employment have a good deal of resemblance to those of the proconsuls of Rome in Asia, Sicily, and Gaul, but obviously no resemblance to those of Carver and Winthrop, and very little to those of the governors of Virginia after that Colony had established a popular House of Burgesses.

The English colonists in America, generally speaking, were men who were seeking new homes in a new world. They brought with them their families and all that was most dear to them. This was especially the case with the colonists of Plymouth and Massachusetts. Many of them were educated men, and all possessed their full share, according to their social condition, of the knowledge and attainments of that age. The distinctive characteristic of their settlement is the introduction of the civilization of Europe into a wilderness, without bringing with it the political institutions of Europe. The arts, sciences, and literature of England came over with the settlers. That great portion of the common law which regulates the social and personal relations and conduct of men came also. The jury came; the *habeas corpus* came; the testamentary power came; and the law of inheritance and descent came also, except that part of it which recognizes the rights of primogeniture,[1] which either did not come at all, or soon gave way to the rule of equal partition of estates among children. But the monarchy did not come, nor the aristocracy, nor the church, as an estate of the realm. Political institutions were to be framed anew, such as should be adapted to the state of things. But it could not be doubtful what should be the nature and character of these institutions. A general social equality prevailed among the settlers, and an equality of political rights seemed the

[1] "Rights of primogeniture," i.e., the law providing that the eldest son should inherit the entire estate of his father.

natural, if not the necessary consequence. After forty years of revolution, violence, and war, the people of France have placed at the head of the fundamental instrument of their government, as the great boon obtained by all their sufferings and sacrifices, the declaration that all Frenchmen are equal before the law. What France has reached only by the expenditure of so much blood and treasure, and the perpetration of so much crime, the English colonists obtained by simply changing their place, carrying with them the intellectual and moral culture of Europe, and the personal and social relations to which they were accustomed, but leaving behind their political institutions. It has been said with much vivacity, that the felicity of the American colonists consisted in their escape from the past. This is true so far as respects political establishments, but no farther. They brought with them a full portion of all the riches of the past, in science, in art, in morals, religion, and literature. The Bible came with them. And it is not to be doubted, that to the free and universal reading of the Bible, in that age, men were much indebted for right views of civil liberty. The Bible is a book of faith, and a book of doctrine, and a book of morals, and a book of religion, of especial revelation from God; but it is also a book which teaches man his own individual responsibility, his own dignity, and his equality with his fellow man.

Bacon and Locke, and Shakespeare and Milton, also came with the colonists. It was the object of the first settlers to form new political systems; but all that belonged to cultivated man, to family, to neighborhood, to social relations, accompanied them. In the Doric [1] phrase of one of our own historians, "They came to settle on bare creation;" but their settlement in the wilderness, nevertheless, was not a lodgment of nomadic tribes, a mere resting place of roaming savages. It was the beginning of a permanent community, the fixed residence of cultivated men. Not only was English literature read, but English, good English, was spoken and written, before the ax had made way to let in the

[1] Plain, unadorned.

sun upon the habitations and fields of Plymouth and Massachusetts. And, whatever may be said to the contrary, a correct use of the English language is, at this day, more general throughout the United States than it is throughout England herself.

But another grand characteristic is, that in the English Colonies political affairs were left to be managed by the colonists themselves. This is another fact wholly distinguishing them in character, as it has distinguished them in fortune, from the colonists of Spain. Here lies the foundation of that experience in self-government which has preserved order and security and regularity amidst the play of popular institutions. Home government was the secret of the prosperity of the North-American settlements. The more distinguished of the New-England colonists, with a most remarkable sagacity and a long-sighted reach into futurity, refused to come to America unless they could bring with them charters providing for the administration of their affairs in this country. They saw from the first the evils of being governed in the New World by a power fixed in the Old. Acknowledging the general superiority of the Crown, they still insisted on the right of passing local laws, and of local administration. And history teaches us the justice and the value of this determination in the example of Virginia. The early attempts to settle that Colony failed, sometimes with the most melancholy and fatal consequences, from want of knowledge, care, and attention on the part of those who had the charge of their affairs in England; and it was only after the issuing of the third charter that its prosperity fairly commenced. The cause was, that by that third charter the people of Virginia, for by this time they deserved to be so called, were allowed to constitute and establish the first popular representative assembly which ever convened on this continent,—the Virginia House of Burgesses.[1]

The great elements, then, of the American system of government, originally introduced by the colonists, and which were early

[1] The first House of Burgesses in Virginia was convened by Gov. Yeardley in 1619, thirteen years after the landing at Jamestown.

in operation, and ready to be developed more and more as the progress of events should justify or demand, were: —

Escape from the existing political systems of Europe, including its religious hierarchies,[1] but the continued possession and enjoyment of its science and arts, its literature and its manners;

Home government, or the power of making in the Colony the municipal laws which were to govern it;

Equality of rights;

Representative assemblies, or forms of government founded on popular elections.

Few topics are more inviting, or more fit for philosophical discussion, than the effect on the happiness of mankind of institutions founded upon these principles; or, in other words, the influence of the New World upon the Old.

Her obligations to Europe for science and art, laws, literature, and manners, America acknowledges as she ought, with respect and gratitude. The people of the United States, descendants of the English stock, grateful for the treasures of knowledge derived from their English ancestors, admit also, with thanks and filial regard, that among those ancestors, under the culture of Hampden and Sidney[2] and other assiduous friends, that seed of popular liberty first germinated, which on our soil has shot up to its full height, until its branches overshadow all the land.

But America has not failed to make returns. If she has not wholly canceled the obligation, or equaled it by others of like weight, she has at least made respectable advances towards repaying the debt. And she admits that, standing in the midst of civilized nations and in a civilized age, a nation among nations, there is a high part which she is expected to act for the general advancement of human interests and human welfare.

[1] Governments by the priesthood.

[2] John Hampden (1594–1643) and Algernon Sidney (1622–83), English patriots distinguished for their fearless advocacy of the rights of the people in opposition to kingly tyranny.

American mines have filled the mints of Europe with the precious metals. The productions of the American soil and climate have poured out their abundance of luxuries for the tables of the rich and of necessaries for the sustenance of the poor. Birds and animals of beauty and value have been added to the European stocks; and transplantations from the unequaled riches of our forests have mingled themselves profusely with the elms and ashes and druidical oaks of England.

America has made contributions to Europe far more important. Who can estimate the amount, or the value, of the augmentation of the commerce of the world that has resulted from America? Who can imagine to himself what would now be the shock to the Eastern Continent, if the Atlantic were no longer traversable, or if there were no longer American productions or American markets?

But America exercises influences, or holds out examples, for the consideration of the Old World, of a much higher, because they are of a moral and political character.

America has furnished to Europe proof of the fact that popular institutions, founded on equality and the principle of representation, are capable of maintaining governments able to secure the rights of person, property, and reputation.

America has proved that it is practicable to elevate the mass of mankind, — that portion which in Europe is called the laboring, or lower class, — to raise them to self-respect, to make them competent to act a part in the great right and great duty of self-government; and she has proved that this may be done by education and the diffusion of knowledge. She holds out an example, a thousand times more encouraging than ever was presented before, to those nine tenths of the human race who are born without hereditary fortune or hereditary rank.

America has furnished to the world the character of Washington. And, if our American institutions had done nothing else, that alone would have entitled them to the respect of mankind.

Washington! "First in war, first in peace, and first in the

hearts of his countrymen!"[1] Washington is all our own! The enthusiastic veneration and regard in which the people of the United States hold him prove them to be worthy of such a countryman; while his reputation abroad reflects the highest honor on his country. I would cheerfully put the question to-day to the intelligence of Europe and the world, What character of the century, upon the whole, stands out in the relief of history, most pure, most respectable, most sublime? and I doubt not, that, by a suffrage approaching to unanimity, the answer would be, Washington!

The structure now standing before us, by its uprightness, its solidity, its durability, is no unfit emblem of his character. His public virtues and public principles were as firm as the earth on which it stands; his personal motives, as pure as the serene heaven in which its summit is lost. But, indeed, though a fit, it is an inadequate emblem. Towering high above the column which our hands have builded, beheld, not by the inhabitants of a single city or a single State, but by all the families of man, ascends the colossal grandeur of the character and life of Washington. In all the constituents of the one, in all the acts of the other, in all its titles to immortal love, admiration, and renown, it is an American production. It is the embodiment and vindication of our Transatlantic liberty. Born upon our soil, of parents also born upon it; never for a moment having had sight of the Old World; instructed, according to the modes of his time, only in the spare, plain, but wholesome elementary knowledge which our institutions provide for the children of the people; growing up beneath and penetrated by the genuine influences of American society; living, from infancy to manhood and age, amidst our expanding but not luxurious civilization; partaking in our great destiny of labor, our long contest with unreclaimed nature and uncivilized man, our agony of glory, the war of Independence, our great victory of peace, the formation of the Union

[1] These words were first used by Henry Lee in his oration on the death of Washington.

and the establishment of the Constitution,—he is all, all our own! Washington is ours. That crowded and glorious life,—

> "Where multitudes of virtues passed along,
> Each pressing foremost, in the mighty throng
> Ambitious to be seen, then making room
> For greater multitudes that were to come,"—

that life was the life of an American citizen.

I claim him for America. In all the perils, in every darkened moment of the state, in the midst of the reproaches of enemies and the misgivings of friends, I turn to that transcendent name for courage and for consolation. To him who denies or doubts whether our fervid liberty can be combined with law, with order, with the security of property, with the pursuits and advancement of happiness; to him who denies that our forms of government are capable of producing exaltation of soul and the passion of true glory; to him who denies that we have contributed anything to the stock of great lessons and great examples,—to all these I reply by pointing to Washington.

And now, friends and fellow citizens, it is time to bring this discourse to a close.

We have indulged in gratifying recollections of the past, in the prosperity and pleasures of the present, and in high hopes for the future. But let us remember that we have duties and obligations to perform corresponding to the blessings which we enjoy. Let us remember the trust, the sacred trust, attaching to the rich inheritance which we have received from our fathers. Let us feel our personal responsibility, to the full extent of our power and influence, for the preservation of the principles of civil and religious liberty. And let us remember that it is only religion and morals and knowledge, that can make men respectable[1] and happy under any form of government. Let us hold fast the great truth, that communities are responsible, as well as individ-

[1] See note, p. 50.

uals; that no government is respectable[1] which is not just; that without unspotted purity of public faith, without sacred public principle, fidelity, and honor, no mere forms of government, no machinery of laws, can give dignity to political society. In our day and generation let us seek to raise and improve the moral sentiment, so that we may look, not for a degraded, but for an elevated and improved future. And when both we and our children shall have been consigned to the house appointed for all living, may love of country and pride of country glow with equal fervor among those to whom our names and our blood shall have descended! And then, when honored and decrepit age shall lean against the base of this monument, and troops of ingenuous youth shall be gathered round it, and when the one shall speak to the other of its objects, the purposes of its construction, and the great and glorious events with which it is connected, there shall rise from every youthful breast the ejaculation, "Thank God, I — I also — AM AN AMERICAN!"

[1] See note, p. 50.

THE CHARACTER OF WASHINGTON.

A SPEECH DELIVERED AT A PUBLIC DINNER IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON, ON THE 22D OF FEBRUARY, 1832, THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY.

I RISE, gentlemen, to propose to you the name of that great man in commemoration of whose birth, and in honor of whose character and services, we are here assembled.

I am sure that I express a sentiment common to every one present, when I say that there is something more than ordinarily solemn and affecting in this occasion.

We are met to testify our regard for him whose name is intimately blended with whatever belongs most essentially to the prosperity, the liberty, the free institutions, and the renown of our country. That name was of power to rally a nation in the hour of thick-thronging public disasters and calamities; that name shone, amid the storm of war, a beacon light, to cheer and guide the country's friends; it flamed, too, like a meteor, to repel her foes. That name, in the days of peace, was a loadstone, attracting to itself a whole people's confidence, a whole people's love, and the whole world's respect. That name, descending with all time, spreading over the whole earth, and uttered in all the languages belonging to the tribes and races of men, will forever be pronounced with affectionate gratitude by every one in whose breast there shall arise an aspiration for human rights and human liberty.

We perform this grateful duty, gentlemen, at the expiration of

a hundred years from his birth, near the place, so cherished and beloved by him, where his dust now reposes, and in the capital which bears his own immortal name.

All experience evinces that human sentiments are strongly influenced by associations. The recurrence of anniversaries, or of longer periods of time, naturally freshens the recollection, and deepens the impression, of events with which they are historically connected. Renowned places, also, have a power to awaken feeling, which all acknowledge. No American can pass by the fields of Bunker Hill, Monmouth, and Camden, as if they were ordinary spots on the earth's surface. Whoever visits them feels the sentiment of love of country kindling anew, as if the spirit that belonged to the transactions which have rendered these places distinguished, still hovered round, with power to move and excite all who in future time may approach them.

But neither of these sources of emotion equals the power with which great moral examples affect the mind. When sublime virtues cease to be abstractions, when they become embodied in human character, and exemplified in human conduct, we should be false to our own nature if we did not indulge in the spontaneous effusions of our gratitude and our admiration. A true lover of the virtue of patriotism delights to contemplate its purest models; and that love of country may be well suspected which affects to soar so high into the regions of sentiment as to be lost and absorbed in the abstract feeling, and becomes too elevated or too refined to glow with fervor in the commendation or the love of individual benefactors. All this is unnatural. It is as if one should be so enthusiastic a lover of poetry as to care nothing for Homer or Milton; so passionately attached to eloquence as to be indifferent to Tully [1] and Chatham; [2] or such a devotee to the arts, in such an ecstasy with the elements of beauty, proportion, and expression, as to regard the masterpieces of Raphael [3]

[1] Marcus Tullius Cicero, the most famous Roman orator (106–43 B.C.).

[2] William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, the "Great Commoner" (1708–78).

[3] Raphael, or Raffaelle Santi d'Urbino, Italian painter (1483–1520).

and Michael Angelo [1] with coldness or contempt. We may be assured, gentlemen, that he who really loves the thing itself, loves its finest exhibitions. A true friend of his country loves her friends and benefactors, and thinks it no degradation to commend and commemorate them. The voluntary outpouring of the public feeling made to-day, from the North to the South, and from the East to the West, proves this sentiment to be both just and natural. In the cities and in the villages, in the public temples and in the family circles, among all ages and sexes, gladdened voices to-day bespeak grateful hearts and a freshened recollection of the virtues of the Father of his Country. And it will be so in all time to come, so long as public virtue is itself an object of regard. The ingenuous youth of America will hold up to themselves the bright model of Washington's example, and study to be what they behold; they will contemplate his character till all its virtues spread out and display themselves to their delighted vision, as the earliest astronomers, the shepherds on the plains of Babylon, gazed at the stars till they saw them form into clusters and constellations, overpowering at length the eyes of the beholders with the united blaze of a thousand lights.

Gentlemen, we are at a point of a century from the birth of Washington; and what a century it has been! During its course, the human mind has seemed to proceed with a sort of geometric velocity, accomplishing for human intelligence and human freedom more than had been done in fives or tens of centuries preceding. Washington stands at the commencement of a new era, as well as at the head of the New World. A century from the birth of Washington has changed the world. The country of Washington has been the theater on which a great part of that change has been wrought, and Washington himself a principal agent by which it has been accomplished. His age and his country are equally full of wonders; and of both he is the chief.

If the poetical prediction uttered a few years before his birth be true; if indeed it be designed by Providence that the grandest

[1] *Michael* Angelo Buonarroti, Italian painter and sculptor (1485–1564).

exhibition of human character and human affairs shall be made on this theater of the Western world; if it be true that

> "The four first acts already past,
> A fifth shall close the drama with the day:
> Time's noblest offspring is the last," [1] —

how could this imposing, swelling, final scene be appropriately opened, how could its intense interest be adequately sustained, but by the introduction of just such a character as our Washington?

Washington had attained his manhood when that spark of liberty was struck out in his own country which has since kindled into a flame, and shot its beams over the earth. In the flow of a century from his birth, the world has changed in science, in arts, in the extent of commerce, in the improvement of navigation, and in all that relates to the civilization of man. But it is the spirit of human freedom, the new elevation of individual man, in his moral, social, and political character, leading the whole long train of other improvements, which has most remarkably distinguished the era. Society, in this century, has not made its progress, like Chinese skill, by a greater acuteness of ingenuity in trifles; it has not merely lashed itself to an increased speed round the old circles of thought and action; but it has assumed a new character; it has raised itself from *beneath* governments to a participation *in* governments; it has mixed moral and political objects with the daily pursuits of individual men; and, with a freedom and strength before altogether unknown, it has applied to these objects the whole power of the human understanding. It has been the era, in short, when the social principle has triumphed over the feudal principle; when society has maintained its rights against military power, and established, on foundations never hereafter to be shaken, its competency to govern itself.

[1] From a poem entitled On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America, written by Bishop Berkeley in 1724. The first line of the stanza is,

"Westward the course of empire takes its way."

It was the extraordinary fortune of Washington, that having been intrusted in Revolutionary times with the supreme military command, and having fulfilled that trust with equal renown for wisdom and for valor, he should be placed at the head of the first government in which an attempt was to be made on a large scale to rear the fabric of social order on the basis of a written constitution and of a pure representative principle. A government was to be established, without a throne, without an aristocracy, without castes, orders, or privileges; and this government, instead of being a democracy, existing and acting within the walls of a single city, was to be extended over a vast country, of different climates, interests, and habits, and of various communions of our common Christian faith. The experiment certainly was entirely new. A popular government of this extent, it was evident, could be framed only by carrying into full effect the principle of representation or of delegated power; and the world was to see whether society could, by the strength of this principle, maintain its own peace and good government, carry forward its own great interests, and conduct itself to political renown and glory. By the benignity of Providence, this experiment, so full of interest to us and to our posterity forever, so full of interest, indeed, to the world in its present generation and in all its generations to come, was suffered to commence under the guidance of Washington. Destined for this high career, he was fitted for it by wisdom, by virtue, by patriotism, by discretion, by whatever can inspire confidence in man towards man. In entering on the untried scenes, early disappointment and the premature extinction of all hope of success would have been certain, had it not been that there did exist throughout the country, in a most extraordinary degree, an unwavering trust in him who stood at the helm.

I remarked, gentlemen, that the whole world was and is interested in the result of this experiment. And is it not so? Do we deceive ourselves, or is it true that at this moment the career which this government is running is among the most attractive

objects to the civilized world? Do we deceive ourselves, or is it true that at this moment that love of liberty, and that understanding of its true principles, which are flying over the whole earth as on the wings of all the winds, are really and truly of American origin?

At the period of the birth of Washington, there existed in Europe no political liberty in large communities, except in the provinces of Holland, and except that England herself had set a great example, so far as it went, by her glorious Revolution of 1688. Everywhere else despotic power was predominant, and the feudal or military principle held the mass of mankind in hopeless bondage. One half of Europe was crushed beneath the Bourbon scepter; and no conception of political liberty, no hope even of religious toleration, existed among that nation which was America's first ally. The king was the state,[1] the king was the country, the king was all. There was one king, with power not derived from his people, and too high to be questioned; and the rest were all subjects, with no political right but obedience. All above was intangible power; all below, quiet subjection. A recent occurrence in the French Chambers shows us how public opinion on these subjects is changed. A minister had spoken of the "king's subjects." "There are no subjects," exclaimed hundreds of voices at once, "in a country where the people make the king!"

Gentlemen, the spirit of human liberty and of free government, nurtured and grown into strength and beauty in America, has stretched its course into the midst of the nations. Like an emanation from Heaven, it has gone forth, and it will not return void. It must change, it is fast changing, the face of the earth. Our great, our high duty is to show, in our own example, that this spirit is a spirit of health as well as a spirit of power; that its benignity is as great as its strength; that its efficiency to secure individual rights, social relations, and moral order, is equal

[1] An allusion to the famous dictum of Louis XIV., "*L'état c'est moi*" ("I am the state"). See p. 37.

to the irresistible force with which it prostrates principalities and powers. The world at this moment is regarding us with a willing, but something of a fearful admiration. Its deep and awful anxiety is to learn whether free states may be stable, as well as free; whether popular power may be trusted, as well as feared: in short, whether wise, regular, and virtuous self-government is a vision for the contemplation of theorists, or a truth established, illustrated, and brought into practice in the country of Washington.

Gentlemen, for the earth which we inhabit and the whole circle of the sun, for all the unborn races of mankind, we seem to hold in our hands, for their weal or woe, the fate of this experiment. If we fail, who shall venture the repetition? If our example shall prove to be one, not of encouragement, but of terror, not fit to be imitated, but fit only to be shunned, where else shall the world look for free models? If this great *Western Sun* be struck out of the firmament, at what other fountain shall the lamp of liberty hereafter be lighted? What other orb shall emit a ray to glimmer even, on the darkness of the world?

There is no danger of our overrating or overstating the important part which we are now acting in human affairs. It should not flatter our personal self-respect; but it should reanimate our patriotic virtues, and inspire us with a deeper and more solemn sense, both of our privileges and of our duties. We cannot wish better for our country nor for the world than that the same spirit which influenced Washington may influence all who succeed him; and that the same blessing from above, which attended his efforts, may also attend theirs.

The principles of Washington's administration are not left doubtful. They are to be found in the Constitution itself, in the great measures recommended and approved by him, in his speeches to Congress, and in that most interesting paper, his "Farewell Address to the People of the United States." The success of the government under his administration is the highest proof of the soundness of these principles. And, after an experience of thirty-five years, what is there which an enemy could

condemn? What is there which either his friends, or the friends of the country, could wish to have been otherwise? I speak, of course, of great measures and leading principles.

In the first place, all his measures were right in their intent. He stated the whole basis of his own great character, when he told the country, in the homely phrase of the proverb, that honesty is the best policy. One of the most striking things ever said of him is, that "*he changed mankind's ideas of political greatness.*"[1] To commanding talents and to success, the common elements of such greatness, he added a disregard of self, a spotlessness of motive, a steady submission to every public and private duty, which threw far into the shade the whole crowd of vulgar great. The object of his regard was the whole country. No part of it was enough to fill his enlarged patriotism. His love of glory, so far as that may be supposed to have influenced him at all, spurned everything short of general approbation. It would have been nothing to him, that his partisans or his favorites outnumbered, or outvoted, or outmanaged, or outclamored, those of other leaders. He had no favorites; he rejected all partisanship; and, acting honestly for the universal good, he deserved what he has so richly enjoyed,—the universal love.

His principle it was, to act right, and to trust the people for support; his principle it was, not to follow the lead of sinister and selfish ends, nor to rely on the little arts of party delusion to obtain public sanction for such a course. Born for his country and for the world, he did not give up to party what was meant for mankind. The consequence is, that his fame is as durable as his principles, as lasting as truth and virtue themselves. While the hundreds whom party excitement, and temporary circumstances, and casual combinations, have raised into transient notoriety, sink again, like thin bubbles, bursting and dissolving into the great ocean, Washington's fame is like the rock which bounds that ocean, and at whose feet its billows are destined to break harmlessly forever.

[1] Works of Fisher Ames.

The maxims upon which Washington conducted our foreign relations were few and simple. The first was an entire and indisputable impartiality towards foreign states. He adhered to this rule of public conduct against very strong inducements to depart from it, and when the popularity of the moment seemed to favor such a departure. In the next place, he maintained true dignity and unsullied honor in all communications with foreign states. It was among the high duties devolved upon him to introduce our new government into the circle of civilized states and powerful nations. Not arrogant or assuming, with no unbecoming or supercilious bearing, he yet exacted for it from all others entire and punctilious respect. He demanded, and he obtained at once, a standing of perfect equality for his country in the society of nations; nor was there a prince or potentate of his day whose personal character carried with it, into the intercourse of other states, a greater degree of respect and veneration.

He regarded other nations only as they stood in political relations to us. With their internal affairs, their political parties and dissensions, he scrupulously abstained from all interference; and, on the other hand, he repelled with spirit all such interference by others with us or our concerns. His sternest rebuke, the most indignant measure of his whole administration, was aimed against such an attempted interference. He felt it as an attempt to wound the national honor, and resented it accordingly.

The reiterated admonitions in his "Farewell Address" show his deep fears that foreign influence would insinuate itself into our counsels through the channels of domestic dissension, and obtain a sympathy with our own temporary parties. Against all such dangers, he most earnestly entreats the country to guard itself. He appeals to its patriotism, to its self-respect, to its own honor, to every consideration connected with its welfare and happiness, to resist, at the very beginning, all tendencies towards such connection of foreign interests with our own affairs. With a tone of earnestness nowhere else found, even in his last affectionate farewell advice to his countrymen, he says, "Against the insid-

ious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow citizens), the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government."

Lastly, on the subject of foreign relations, Washington never forgot that we had interests peculiar to ourselves. The primary political concerns of Europe, he saw, did not affect us. We had nothing to do with her balance of power, her family compacts, or her successions to thrones. We were placed in a condition favorable to neutrality during European wars, and to the enjoyment of all the great advantages of that relation. "Why, then," he asks us, "why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice?"

Indeed, gentlemen, Washington's "Farewell Address" is full of truths important at all times, and particularly deserving consideration at the present. With a sagacity which brought the future before him, and made it like the present, he saw and pointed out the dangers that even at this moment most imminently threaten us. I hardly know how a greater service of that kind could now be done to the community than by a renewed and wide diffusion of that admirable paper, and an earnest invitation to every man in the country to reperuse and consider it. Its political maxims are invaluable; its exhortations to love of country and to brotherly affection among citizens, touching; and the solemnity with which it urges the observance of moral duties, and impresses the power of religious obligation, gives to it the highest character of truly disinterested, sincere, parental advice.

The domestic policy of Washington found its polestar in the avowed objects of the Constitution itself. He sought so to administer that Constitution as to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the

blessings of liberty. These were objects interesting in the highest degree to the whole country; and his policy embraced the whole country.

Among his earliest and most important duties was the organization of the government itself, the choice of his confidential advisers, and the various appointments to office. This duty, so important and delicate, when a whole government was to be organized, and all its offices for the first time filled, was yet not difficult to him; for he had no sinister ends to accomplish, no clamorous partisans to gratify, no pledges to redeem, no object to be regarded, but simply the public good. It was a plain, straightforward matter, a mere honest choice of good men for the public service.

His own singleness of purpose, his disinterested patriotism, were evinced by the selection of his first Cabinet, and by the manner in which he filled the seats of justice and other places of high trust. He sought for men fit for offices, not for offices which might suit men. Above personal considerations, above local considerations, above party considerations, he felt that he could only discharge the sacred trust which the country had placed in his hands, by a diligent inquiry after real merit, and a conscientious preference of virtue and talent. The whole country was the field of his selection. He explored that whole field, looking only for whatever it contained most worthy and distinguished. He was, indeed, most successful; and he deserved success for the purity of his motives, the liberality of his sentiments, and his enlarged and manly policy.

Washington's administration established the national credit, made provision for the public debt and for that patriotic army whose interests and welfare were always so dear to him, and, by laws wisely framed and of admirable effect, raised the commerce and navigation of the country, almost at once, from depression and ruin to a state of prosperity. Nor were his eyes open to these interests alone. He viewed with equal concern its agriculture and manufactures, and, so far as they came within the

regular exercise of the powers of this government, they experienced regard and favor.

It should not be omitted, even in this slight reference to the general measures and general principles of the first President, that he saw and felt the full value and importance of the judicial department of the government. An upright and able administration of the laws, he held to be alike indispensable to private happiness and public liberty. The temple of justice, in his opinion, was a sacred place, and he would profane and pollute it who should call any to minister in it not spotless in character, not incorruptible in integrity, not competent by talent and learning, not a fit object of unhesitating trust.

Among other admonitions, Washington has left us, in his last communication to his country, an exhortation against the excesses of party spirit. A fire not to be quenched, he yet conjures us not to fan and feed the flame. Undoubtedly, gentlemen, it is the greatest danger of our system and of our time. Undoubtedly, if that system should be overthrown, it will be the work of excessive party spirit, acting on the government, which is dangerous enough, or acting *in* the government, which is a thousand times more dangerous; for government then becomes nothing but organized party, and, in the strange vicissitudes of human affairs, it may come at last, perhaps, to exhibit the singular paradox of government itself being in opposition to its own powers, at war with the very elements of its own existence. Such cases are hopeless. As men may be protected against murder, but cannot be guarded against suicide, so government may be shielded from the assaults of external foes; but nothing can save it when it chooses to lay violent hands on itself.

Finally, gentlemen, there was in the breast of Washington one sentiment so deeply felt, so constantly uppermost, that no proper occasion escaped without its utterance. From the letter which he signed in behalf of the Convention when the Constitution was sent out to the people, to the moment when he put his hand to that last paper in which he addressed his countrymen, the Union

—the Union was the great object of his thoughts. In that first letter he tells them that, to him and his brethren of the Convention, union appears to be the greatest interest of every true American; and in that last paper he conjures them to regard that unity of government which constitutes them one people, as the very palladium[1] of their prosperity and safety, and the security of liberty itself. He regarded the union of these States less as one of our blessings than as the great treasure-house which contained them all. Here, in his judgment, was the great magazine of all our means of prosperity; here, as he thought, and as every true American still thinks, are deposited all our animating prospects, all our solid hopes for future greatness. He has taught us to maintain this union, not by seeking to enlarge the powers of the government, on the one hand, nor by surrendering them, on the other, but by an administration of them at once firm and moderate, pursuing objects truly national, and carried on in a spirit of justice and equity.

The extreme solicitude for the preservation of the Union, at all times manifested by him, shows not only the opinion he entertained of its importance, but his clear perception of those causes which were likely to spring up to endanger it, and which, if once they should overthrow the present system, would leave little hope of any future beneficial union. Of all the presumptions indulged by presumptuous man, that is one of the rashest which looks for repeated and favorable opportunities for the deliberate establishment of a united government over distinct and widely extended communities. Such a thing has happened once in human affairs, and but once: the event stands out as a prominent exception to all ordinary history; and, unless we suppose ourselves running into an age of miracles, we may not expect its repetition.

Washington, therefore, could regard, and did regard, nothing

[1] Preserver. This was the name applied to the statue of Pallas Athene, the presence of which within the walls of Troy was believed to assure the *preservation* of the city from the attacks of the Greeks.

as of paramount political interest but the integrity of the Union itself. With a united government well administered, he saw that we had nothing to fear; and without it, nothing to hope. The sentiment is just, and its momentous truth should solemnly impress the whole country. If we might regard our country as personated in the spirit of Washington; if we might consider him as representing her in her past renown, her present prosperity, and her future career, and as, in that character, demanding of us all to account for our conduct as political men or as private citizens, — how should he answer him who has ventured to talk of disunion and dismemberment? Or how should he answer him who dwells perpetually on local interests, and fans every kindling flame of local prejudice? How should he answer him who would array State against State, interest against interest, and party against party, careless of the continuance of that *unity of government which constitutes us one people?*

The political prosperity which this country has attained, and which it now enjoys, has been acquired mainly through the instrumentality of the present government. While this agent continues, the capacity of attaining to still higher degrees of prosperity exists also. We have, while this lasts, a political life capable of beneficial exertion, with power to resist or overcome misfortunes, to sustain us against the ordinary accidents of human affairs, and to promote, by active efforts, every public interest. But dismemberment strikes at the very being which preserves these faculties. It would lay its rude and ruthless hand on this great agent itself. It would sweep away, not only what we possess, but all power of regaining lost, or acquiring new possessions. It would leave the country not only bereft of its prosperity and happiness, but without limbs, or organs, or faculties by which to exert itself hereafter in the pursuit of that prosperity and happiness.

Other misfortunes may be borne, or their effects overcome. If disastrous war should sweep our commerce from the ocean, another generation may renew it; if it exhaust our treasury, future industry may replenish it; if it desolate and lay waste our fields,

still, under a new cultivation, they will grow green again, and ripen to future harvests. It were but a trifle, even if the walls of yonder Capitol were to crumble, if its lofty pillars should fall, and its gorgeous decorations be all covered by the dust of the valley. All these might be rebuilt. But who shall reconstruct the fabric of demolished government? Who shall rear again the well-proportioned columns of constitutional liberty? Who shall frame together the skillful architecture which unites national sovereignty with State rights, individual security, and public prosperity? No, if these columns fall, they will be raised not again. Like the Coliseum [1] and the Parthenon,[2] they will be destined to a mournful, a melancholy immortality. Bitterer tears, however, will flow over them than were ever shed over the monuments of Roman or Grecian art; for they will be the remnants of a more glorious edifice than Greece or Rome ever saw,—the edifice of constitutional American liberty.

But let us hope for better things. Let us trust in that gracious Being who has hitherto held our country as in the hollow of his hand. Let us trust to the virtue and the intelligence of the people, and to the efficacy of religious obligation. Let us trust to the influence of Washington's example. Let us hope that that fear of Heaven which expels all other fear, and that regard to duty which transcends all other regard, may influence public men and private citizens, and lead our country still onward in her happy career. Full of these gratifying anticipations and hopes, let us look forward to the end of that century which is now commenced. A hundred years hence, other disciples of Washington will celebrate his birth, with no less of sincere admiration than we now commemorate it. When they shall meet, as we now meet, to do themselves and him that honor, so surely as they shall see the blue summits of his native mountains rise in the horizon, so surely as they shall behold the river on whose banks he lived, and on whose banks he rests, still flowing on to-

[1] The famous amphitheater at Rome, built by the Emperor Vespasian.

[2] The marble temple of Athene, on the Acropolis at Athens.

wards the sea, so surely may they see, as we now see, the flag of the Union floating on the top of the Capitol; and then, as now, may the sun in his course visit no land more free, more happy, more lovely, than this our own country!

Gentlemen, I propose

"THE MEMORY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON."

of the Revolution, when the treasury of the country was bankrupt, with unpaid navies and starving armies, it was a merchant, — Robert Morris of Philadelphia, — who by a noble sacrifice of his own fortune, as well as by the exercise of his great financial abilities, sustained and supported the wise men of the country in council, and the brave men of the country in the field of battle? Nor are there wanting more recent instances. I have the pleasure to see near me, and near my friend who proposed this sentiment, the son of an eminent merchant of New England [Mr. Goodhue], an early member of the Senate of the United States, always consulted, always respected, in whatever belonged to the duty and the means of putting in operation the financial and commercial system of the country; and this mention of the father of my friend brings to my mind the memory of his great colleague, the early associate of Hamilton and of Ames, trusted and beloved by Washington, consulted on all occasions connected with the administration of the finances, the establishment of the treasury department, the imposition of the first rates of duty, and with everything that belonged to the commercial system of the United States, — George Cabot of Massachusetts.

I will take this occasion to say, gentlemen, that there is no truth better developed and established in the history of the United States, from the formation of the Constitution to the present time, than this, — that the mercantile classes, the great commercial masses of the country, whose affairs connect them strongly with every State in the Union and with all the nations of the earth, whose business and profession give a sort of nationality to their character, — that no class of men among us, from the beginning, have shown a stronger and firmer devotion to whatsoever has been designed, or to whatever has tended, to preserve the union of these States and the stability of the free government under which we live. The Constitution of the United States, in regard to the various municipal regulations and local interests, has left the States individual, disconnected, isolated. It has left them *their* own codes of criminal law; it has left them their own sys-

tem of municipal regulations. But there was one great interest, one great concern, which, from the very nature of the case, was no longer to be left under the regulations of the then thirteen, afterwards twenty, and now twenty-six States, but was committed, necessarily committed, to the care, the protection, and the regulation of one government; and this was that great unit, as it has been called, the commerce of the United States. There is no commerce of New York, no commerce of Massachusetts, none of Georgia, none of Alabama or Louisiana. All and singular, in the aggregate and in all its parts, is the commerce of the United States, regulated at home by a uniform system of laws under the authority of the general government, and protected abroad under the flag of our government, the glorious *E Pluribus Unum*,[1] and guarded, if need be, by the power of the general government all over the world. There is, therefore, gentlemen, nothing more cementing, nothing that makes us more cohesive, nothing that more repels all tendencies to separation and dismemberment, than this great, this common, I may say this overwhelming interest of one commerce, one general system of trade and navigation, one everywhere and with every nation of the globe. There is no flag of any particular American State seen in the Pacific seas, or in the Baltic, or in the Indian Ocean. Who knows, or who hears, there of your proud State, or of my proud State? Who knows, or who hears, of anything, at the extremest north or south, or at the antipodes; in the remotest regions of the Eastern or Western sea,—who ever hears, or knows, of anything but an American ship, or of any American enterprise of a commercial character that does not bear the impression of the American Union with it?

It would be a presumption of which I cannot be guilty, gentlemen, for me to imagine for a moment, that, among the gifts which New England has made to our common country, I am anything more than one of the most inconsiderable. I readily bring to mind the great men, not only with whom I have met,

[1] One out of many,—the motto of the United States.

but those of the generation before me, who now sleep with their fathers, distinguished in the Revolution, distinguished in the formation of the Constitution and in the early administration of the government, always and everywhere distinguished; and I shrink in just and conscious humiliation before their established character and established renown; and all that I venture to say, and all that I venture to hope may be thought true in the sentiment proposed, is, that so far as mind and purpose, so far as intention and will, are concerned, I may be found among those who are capable of embracing the whole country, of which they are members, in a proper, comprehensive, and patriotic regard. We all know that the objects which are nearest are the objects which are dearest. Family affections, neighborhood affections, social relations; these, in truth, are nearest and dearest to us all: but whosoever shall be able rightly to adjust the graduation of his affections, and to love his friends and his neighbors and his country as he ought to love them, merits the commendation pronounced by the philosophic poet upon him

"Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis."[1]

Gentlemen, it has been my fortune, in the little part which I have acted in public life, for good or for evil to the community, to be connected entirely with that government, which, within the limits of constitutional power, exercises jurisdiction over all the States and all the people. My friend at the end of the table, on my left, has spoken pleasantly to us to-night of the reputed miracles of tutelar saints. In a sober sense, in a sense of deep conviction, I say that the emergence of this country from British domination, and its union, under its present form of government, beneath the general Constitution of the country, if not a miracle, is, I do not say the most, but one of the most, fortunate, the most admirable, the most auspicious, occurrences which have ever fallen to the lot of man. Circumstances have wrought out for

[1] "Who has learned what he owes to his country, and what to his friends." — HORACE.

us a state of things, which, in other times and other regions, philosophy has dreamed of, and theory has proposed, and speculation has suggested, but which man has never been able to accomplish. I mean the government of a great nation, over a vastly extended portion of the surface of the earth, *by means of local institutions for local purposes, and general institutions for general purposes.* I know of nothing in the history of the world, notwithstanding the great league of Grecian states, notwithstanding the success of the Roman system (and certainly there is no exception to the remark in modern history), — I know of nothing so suitable, on the whole, for the great interests of a great people spread over a large portion of the globe, as the provision of local legislation for local and municipal purposes, with, not a confederacy, nor a loose binding together of separate parts, but a limited, positive general government, for positive general purposes, over the whole. We may derive eminent proofs of this truth from the past and the present. What see we to-day in the agitations on the other side of the Atlantic? I speak of them, of course, without expressing any opinion on questions of politics in a foreign country; but I speak of them as an occurrence which shows the great expediency, the utility, I may say the necessity, of local legislation. If, in a country on the other side of the water [Ireland], there be some who desire a severance of one part of the empire from another, under a proposition of repeal, there are others who propose a continuance of the existing relation under a federative system: and what is this? No more and no less than an approximation to that system under which we live, which for local municipal purposes shall have a local legislature, and for general purposes a general legislature.

This becomes the more important when we consider that the United States stretch over so many degrees of latitude, that they embrace such a variety of climate, that various conditions and relations of society naturally call for different laws and regulations. Let me ask whether the Legislature of New York could wisely pass laws for the government of Louisiana, or whether

the Legislature of Louisiana could wisely pass laws for Pennsylvania or New York. Everybody will say, "No." And yet the interests of New York and Pennsylvania and Louisiana, in whatever concerns their relations between themselves and their general relations with all the states of the world, are found to be perfectly well provided for, and adjusted with perfect congruity, by committing these general interests to one common government, the result of popular general elections among them all.

I confess, gentlemen, that having been, as I have said, in my humble career in public life, employed in that portion of the public service which is connected with the general government, I have contemplated, as the great object of every proceeding, not only the particular benefit of the moment, or the exigency of the occasion, but the preservation of this system; for I do consider it so much the result of circumstances, and that so much of it is due to fortunate concurrence as well as to the sagacity of the great men acting upon those occasions, that it is an experiment of such remarkable and renowned success, that he is a fool or a madman who would wish to try that experiment a second time. I see to-day, and we all see, that the descendants of the Puritans, who landed upon the Rock of Plymouth; the followers of Raleigh, who settled Virginia and North Carolina; he who lives where the truncheon of empire, so to speak, was borne by Smith; the inhabitants of Georgia; he who settled, under the auspices of France, at the mouth of the Mississippi; the Swede on the Delaware; the Quaker of Pennsylvania,—all find at this day their common interest, their common protection, their common *glory*, under the united government, which leaves them all, nevertheless, in the administration of their own municipal and local affairs, to be Frenchmen, or Swedes, or Quakers, or whatever they choose. And when one considers that this system of government, I will not say has produced, because God and nature and circumstances have had an agency in it,—but when it is considered that this system has not prevented, but has rather encouraged, the growth of the people of this country from three millions on

the glorious 4th of July, 1776, to seventeen millions now, who is there that will say, upon this hemisphere, nay, who is there that will stand up in any hemisphere, who is there in any part of the world, that will say that the great experiment of a united republic has *failed* in America? And yet I know, gentlemen, I feel, that this united system is held together by strong tendencies to union, at the same time that it is kept from too much leaning towards consolidation by a strong tendency in the several States to support each its own power and consideration. In the physical world it is said, that

"All nature's difference keeps all nature's peace,"

and there is in the political world this same harmonious difference, this regular play of the positive and negative powers (if I may so say), which, at least for one glorious half century, has kept us as we have been kept, and made us what we are.

But, gentlemen, I must not allow myself to pursue this topic. It is a sentiment so commonly repeated by me upon all public occasions, and upon all private occasions, and everywhere, that I forbear to dwell upon it now. It is the union of these States, it is the system of government under which we live, beneath the Constitution of the United States, happily framed, wisely adopted, successfully administered for fifty years,—it is mainly this, I say, that gives us power at home and credit abroad. And, for one, I never stop to consider the power, or wealth, or greatness of a State. I tell you, Mr. Chairman, I care nothing for your Empire State as such. Delaware and Rhode Island are as high in my regard as New York. In population, in power, in the government over us, you have a greater share. You would have the same share, if you were divided into forty States. It is not, therefore, as a State sovereignty, it is only because New York is a vast portion of the whole American people, that I regard this State, as I always shall regard her, as respectable [1] and honorable. But among State sovereignties there is no preference;

[1] See note, p. 50.

there is nothing high and nothing low; every State is independent, and every State is equal. If we depart from this great principle, then are we no longer one people, but we are thrown back again upon the Confederation, and upon that state of things in which the inequality of the States produced all the evils which befell us in times past, and a thousand ill-adjusted and jarring interests.

Mr. President, I wish, then, without pursuing these thoughts, without especially attempting to produce any fervid impression by dwelling upon them, to take this occasion to answer my friend who has proposed the sentiment, and to respond to it by saying, that whoever would serve his country in this our day, with whatever degree of talent, great or small, it may have pleased the Almighty Power to give him, he cannot serve it, he will not serve it, unless he be able, at least, to extend his political designs, purposes, and objects, till they shall comprehend the whole country of which he is a servant.

Sir, I must say a word in connection with that event which we have assembled to commemorate. It has seemed fit to the dwellers in New York, New Englanders by birth or descent, to form this society. They have formed it for the relief of the poor and distressed, and for the purpose of commemorating annually the great event of the settlement of the country from which they spring. It would be great presumption in me to go back to the scene of that settlement, or to attempt to exhibit it in any colors, after the exhibition made to-day; yet it is an event that in all time since, and in all time to come, and more in times to come than in times past, must stand out in great and striking characteristics to the admiration of the world. The sun's return to his winter's solstice, in 1620, is the epoch from which he dates his first acquaintance with the small people, now one of the happiest, and destined to be one of the greatest, that his rays fall upon; and his annual visitation, from that day to this, to our frozen region, has enabled him to see that progress, *progress*, was the characteristic of that small people. He has seen them, from a

handful that one of his beams coming through a keyhole might illuminate, spread over a hemisphere which he cannot enlighten under the slightest eclipse. Nor, though this globe should revolve round him for tens of hundreds of thousands of years, will he see such another incipient colonization upon any part of this attendant upon his mighty orb. What else he may see in those other planets which revolve around him, we cannot tell, at least until we have tried the fifty-foot telescope which Lord Rosse is preparing for that purpose.

There is not, gentlemen, and we may as well admit it, in any history of the past, another epoch from which so many great events have taken a turn,—events which, while important to us, are equally important to the country from whence we came. The settlement of Plymouth—concurring, I always wish to be understood, with that of Virginia—was the settlement of New England by colonies of Old England. Now, gentlemen, take these two ideas, and run out the thoughts suggested by both. What has been, and what is to be, Old England? What has been, what is, and what may be, in the providence of God, *New* England, with her neighbors and associates? I would not dwell, gentlemen, with any particular emphasis upon the sentiment, which I nevertheless entertain, with respect to the great diversity in the races of men. I do not know how far, in that respect, I might not encroach on those mysteries of Providence, which, while I adore, I may not comprehend; but it does seem to me to be very remarkable that we may go back to the time when New England, or those who founded it, were *subtracted* from Old England, and both Old England and New England went on, nevertheless, in their mighty career of progress and power.

Let me begin with New England for a moment. What has resulted, embracing, as I say, the nearly contemporaneous settlement of Virginia,—what has resulted from the planting upon this continent of two or three slender colonies from the mother country? Gentlemen, the great epitaph commemorative of the character and the worth, the discoveries and glory, of Columbus, was,

that he had *given a new world to the crowns of Castile and Aragon.* Gentlemen, this is a great mistake. It does not come up at all to the great merits of Columbus. He gave the territory of the southern hemisphere to the crowns of Castile and Aragon; but as a place for the plantation of colonies, as a place for the habitation of men, as a place to which laws and religion and manners and science were to be transferred, as a place in which the creatures of God should multiply and fill the earth, under friendly skies and with religious hearts, he gave it to the whole world, he gave it to universal man! From this seminal principle, and from a handful, — a hundred saints, blessed of God and ever honored of men, landed on the shores of Plymouth, and elsewhere along the coast, united, as I have said already more than once, in the process of time, with the settlement at Jamestown, — has sprung this great people of which we are a portion.

I do not reckon myself among quite the oldest of the land; and yet it so happens that very recently I recurred to an exulting speech or oration of my own,[1] in which I spoke of my country as consisting of nine millions of people. I could hardly persuade myself, that, within the short time which had elapsed since that epoch, our population had doubled; and that at the present moment there does exist most unquestionably as great a probability of its continued progress in the same ratio as has ever existed in any previous time. I do not know whose imagination is fertile enough, I do not know whose conjectures, I may almost say, are *wild* enough, to tell what may be the progress of wealth and population in the United States in half a century to come. All we know is, here is a people of from seventeen to twenty millions, intelligent, educated, freeholders, freemen, republicans, possessed of all the means of modern improvement, modern science, arts, literature, with the world before them! There is nothing to check them till they touch the shores of the Pacific,[2] and then,

[1] Oration on the First Settlement of New England, Dec. 22, 1820.

[2] Five years later, gold was discovered in California, and the first great movement of settlers towards the Pacific coast was begun.

they are so much accustomed to water, that *that's* a facility and no obstruction!

So much, gentlemen, for this branch of the English race. But what has happened, meanwhile, to England herself, since the period of the departure of the Puritans from the coast of Lincolnshire, from the English Boston? Gentlemen, in speaking of the progress of English power, of English dominion and authority, from that period to the present, I shall be understood, of course, as neither entering into any defense, or any accusation, of the policy which has conducted her to her present state. As to the justice of her wars, the necessity of her conquests, the propriety of those acts by which she has taken possession of so great a portion of the globe, it is not the business of the present occasion to inquire. *Neque teneo, neque refello.*[1] But I speak of them, or intend to speak of them, as facts of the most extraordinary character, unequaled in the history of any nation on the globe, and the consequences of which may and must reach through a thousand generations. The Puritans left England in the reign of James I. England herself had then become somewhat settled and established in the Protestant faith, and in the quiet enjoyment of property, by the previous energetic, long, and prosperous reign of Elizabeth. Her successor was James VI. of Scotland, now become James I. of England; and here was a union of the crowns, but not of the kingdoms,—a very important distinction. Ireland was held by a military power; and one cannot but see that at that day, whatever may be true or untrue in more recent periods of her history, Ireland was held by England by the two great potencies,—the power of the sword and the power of confiscation. In other respects, England was nothing like the England which we now behold. Her foreign possessions were quite inconsiderable. She had some hold on the West India Islands; she had Acadia, or Nova Scotia, which King James granted, by wholesale, for the endowment of the knights whom he created by hundreds. And what has been

[1] I neither support nor confute.

her progress? Did she then possess Gibraltar, the key to the Mediterranean? Did she possess a port in the Mediterranean? Was Malta hers? Were the Ionian Islands hers? Was the southern extremity of Africa, was the Cape of Good Hope hers? Were the whole of her vast possessions in India hers? Was her great Australian empire hers? While that branch of her population which followed the western star, and under its guidance committed itself to the duty of settling, fertilizing, and peopling an unknown wilderness in the West, were pursuing their destinies, other causes, providential doubtless, were leading English power eastward and southward, in consequence and by means of her naval prowess and the extent of her commerce, until in our day we have seen that within the Mediterranean, on the western coast and at the southern extremity of Africa, in Arabia, in hither India and farther India, she has a population *ten times* as great as that of the British Isles two centuries ago. And recently, as we have witnessed, — I will not say with how much truth and justice, policy or impolicy; I do not speak at all to the morality of the action, I only speak to the *fact*, — she has found admission into China, and has carried the Christian religion and the Protestant faith to the doors of three hundred millions of people.[1]

It has been said that whosoever would see the Eastern world before it turns into a Western world, must make his visit soon, because steamboats and omnibuses, commerce, and all the arts of Europe, are extending themselves from Egypt to Suez, from Suez to the Indian seas, and from the Indian seas all over the explored regions of the still farther East.

Now, gentlemen, I do not know what practical views, or what practical results, may take place from this great expansion of the power of the two branches of Old England. It is not for me to say. I only can see, that on this continent *all* is to be *Anglo-American*, from Plymouth Rock to the Pacific seas, from the

[1] The war between China and Great Britain, known as the "opium war," which began in 1834, was ended by the treaty of Aug. 26, 1842. By the conditions of this treaty, Hong-Kong was ceded to the British.

north pole to California.[1] That is certain; and in the Eastern world I only see that you can hardly place a finger on a map of the world, and be an *inch* from an English settlement.

Gentlemen, if there be anything in the supremacy of races, the experiment now in progress will develop it. If there be any truth in the idea that those who issued from the great Caucasian fountain, and spread over Europe, are to react on India and on Asia, and to act on the whole Western world, it may not be for us, nor our children, nor our grandchildren, to see it, but it will be for our descendants of some generation to see the extent of that progress and dominion of the favored races.

For myself, I believe there is no limit fit to be assigned to it by the human mind, because I find at work everywhere, on both sides of the Atlantic, under various forms and degrees of restriction on the one hand, and under various degrees of motive and stimulus on the other hand, in these branches of a common race, the great principle *of the freedom of human thought and the respectability of individual character.* I find everywhere an elevation of the character of man as man, an elevation of the individual as a component part of society. I find everywhere a rebuke of the idea that the many are made for the few, or that government is anything but an *agency* for mankind. And I care not beneath what zone, frozen, temperate, or torrid; I care not of what complexion, white or brown; I care not under what circumstances of climate or cultivation,—if I can find a race of men on an inhabitable spot of earth whose general sentiment it is, and whose general feeling it is, that government is made for man,—man as a religious, moral, and social being,—and not man for government, there I know that I shall find prosperity and happiness.

[1] It is well to remember, that, when these words were spoken, California was a province of Mexico, inhabited only by Indians and a few people of Spanish descent.

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